



INTERNATIONAL
LONGEVITY
CENTER-JAPAN

Global
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Journal
on
Longevity
and
Society
2008

Get Around This Table ...



International Longevity Center=ILC was founded with the aim of studying various issues concerning population aging with low-fertility from the international and interdisciplinary perspectives and sharing the findings broadly to educate the public and to make policy proposals.

Eleven centers have been established to date in the world: in the United States, Japan, France, the United Kingdom, Dominican Republic, India, South Africa, Argentina, the Netherlands, Israel and Singapore. These centers constitute an alliance (called ILC Global Alliance) that promotes joint studies as well as country-specific activities.

This concept of ILC Global Alliance was advocated by Dr. Robert N. Butler, a global authority on gerontology (current President & CEO of ILC-USA). In Japan, a group of private companies endorsed his vision; also, then Ministry of Health and Welfare (currently Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) assented to the thought. Consequently after three years of preparatory work with the guidance of the Ministry, ILC-Japan was launched in November 1990. Since then, we have actively sought to promote policy proposals and advocacies in low-fertility aging society as well as to share our findings and to educate the public.

Additionally we think it one of ILC-Japan's crucial missions to provide abroad information on problems of population aging in Japan and the systems and status to cope with them.

ILC-Japan is proactively making efforts to realize an aging society where all generations will support one another and live happily.

ILC Global Alliance



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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

1 Is There Anything I Can Do to Help? •2
Natural Elderly Independence and Participation in Society

Keiko Higuchi

*Chairperson, Women's Association for
the Better Aging Society*

Hitoshi Kato

Non-fiction author

2 The Aging of Suburban Residential Areas: •12
Creating New Ways of Living

Mariko Sonoda

Associate professor, Meiji University

Yukihiro Kadono

Professor, Kwansei Gakuin University

Yuko Nishikawa

Professor, Kyoto Bunkyo University

Ken Miura

*Associate professor, Graduate School,
Osaka City University*

3 The Health Insurance System in Japan •28
Its History and Significance

Hidehisa Otsuji

*Former Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare
House of Councilors Member*

Yoshio Gyoten

Medical commentator

4 The Adult Guardianship System and •38
Human Rights of the Elderly

Sachiko Murata

Welfare journalist

Hiroshi Kanekawa

*Executive Director, Japanese Association of
Certified Social Workers*

Makoto Arai

*Professor and Dean of
Tsukuba University Law School*

Sachiko Takagi

*Senior Staff, General Affairs Welfare Division,
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... to Create the Global Network for the World's Next Challenge

5 A New Form of Local Community •52

Takeshi Sasaki

*Professor, Gakushuin University
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Mitsuo Makino

*Mayor of Iida City in Nagano Prefecture
Member, Self-Supporting Zone Study Panel*

Michiko Mukuno

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President, Japan NPO Center*

Participants' List •66

This journal includes the part of roundtable discussion at the beginning part of every issue of "Global Information Journal on Longevity and Society" (originally in Japanese) published by ILC-Japan in 2008. The roundtable discussion was attended by leading persons of each field and this issue is the extracts of those discussions from vol. 5 to vol. 9 which were translated into English and compiled by ILC-Japan.

Participants:

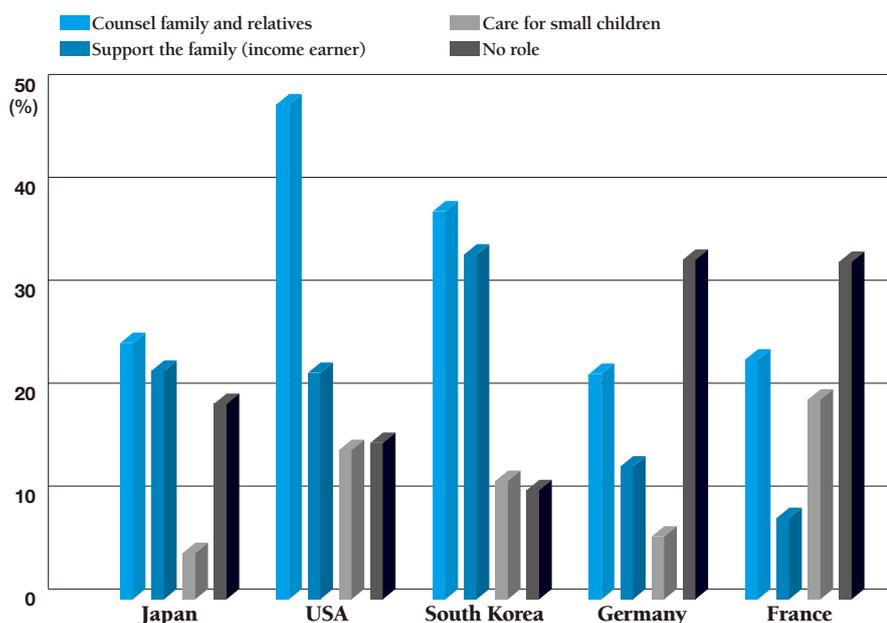
Keiko Higuchi
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 Association for the Better Aging
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Is There Anything I Can Do to Help?

Natural Elderly Independence and Participation in Society

• The role of the elderly in family life (multiple answers)



Source: "2006 Global Comparative Survey on the Lives and Feelings of the Elderly" by the Cabinet Office

Note: The subjects of this survey were men and women age 60 and over not living in elder care facilities. The survey was conducted in Japan from November-December 2005 and in other countries from December 2005-February 2006.

Hitoshi Kato
Non-fiction author



The topic of what role the elderly can play in their communities and in society is related to how people live after they retire from work. It is a topic that has been addressed in many forums. There have been changes in family relations, as well as in the roles that the elderly play in the family. What is necessary so that the personality and experience of each elderly person can be used and, most importantly, so that the person can enjoy interacting with his or her family and community and fulfilling his or her role therein?

From various perspectives, we talked with Keiko Higuchi, who wrote a book that focuses on the power of grandparents, and Hitoshi Kato, who wrote on the individual lives of retirees with great care.

Kato: Ms. Higuchi, when I read your book, *Grandma Power*^{•1}, it reminded me that ways of thinking in the world today are quite myopic. Likewise, I feel a strong dissatisfaction and concern that the mass media has such a one-sided view. Perhaps the decline in the influential power of grandparents is one reason that diverse thinking is becoming difficult.

I was born in 1947, but my parents worked long hours to support the family in the chaotic post-war period, so I was raised by my grandparents. Looking back now, I think

my grandparents taught me that there is not just one path. My grandparents showed me that there are many values in the world and that, adults and children are accepted and encouraged for who they are even in local communities.

Parents feel responsibility and pressure toward child-rearing, but grandparents can interact with their grandchildren as “good people” unconditionally. To play the role of “good people” is very important. Grandparents exist to interact with their grandchildren and foster love through their gentleness and



•1 **Grandma Power**
(Shinsui-sha, 2006)

With the sudden increase in the population of the elderly and working women, the importance of the role that grandparents play is globally being reevaluated. This book discusses the future of the influential power of grandparents, taking into consideration child-rearing by grandparents, changes in family relations now and then, and so forth.

permissiveness.

In my view, the fact that there are people in addition to family who will affirm, accept, and indulge children within the community is very important for today's children who must live with the feeling that there is no way out. The role that the elderly should play lies therein, but I have been concerned lately that even grandparents tend to pigeon-hole children into one value system.

Higuchi: As I wrote in *Grandma Power*, I too am perplexed by today's grandparents, perhaps because grandparents in their 60s were raised completely immersed in studying for college entrance exams.

When I was a child, I had many friends whose grandparents had already died, but thanks to the average lifespan increasing, almost all children born today have living grandparents. As you have said though, Mr. Kato, with the shift to nuclear families, there is very little interaction with grandparents.

Despite the fact that we've

reached a time when people enjoy living to the age of 100, the influential power of grandparents within the family has declined, and their main role is to indulge the children. That's why I thought it would be good to create a place to meet in local communities.

It is difficult for individual grandparents to gain influence, so this means raising social power of grandparents within the community. In particular, I want to encourage grandfathers who have plenty of social experience and diverse viewpoints.

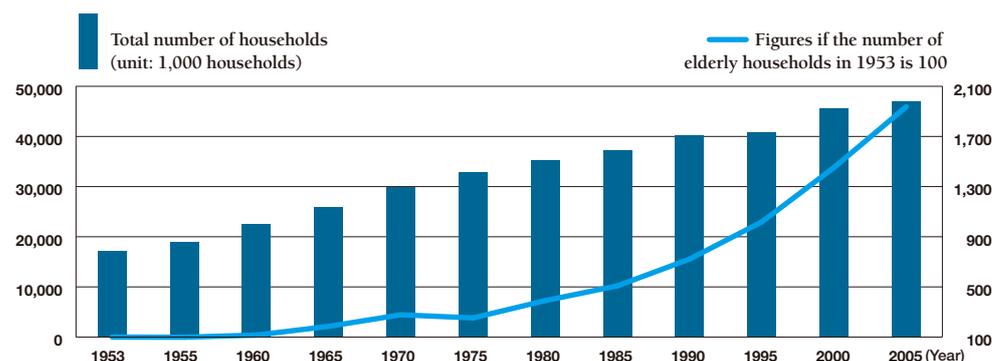
Kato: Unfortunately, the reality of aging is that grandparents are increasingly cut off from the family and the community.^{•2}

For example, nursing homes need to be established using various community resources, but they are adopting a system of shutting everything in these facilities. I think the facilities should first be open to the community.

•2 Increase in the number of nuclear families and elderly households

Source: "Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions of People" by the Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Note: "Elderly households" means "households composed only of men age 65 or older and/or women age 60 or older with or without unmarried individuals under age 18" until 1974 and "households composed of people age 65 or older with or without unmarried individuals under age 18" from 1975 onward.





“ From the individual to the collective, the 21st century as an era of reinventing community ”

Higuchi: This is a little abstract, but to sum up, I think the 21st century is an era of reinventing community. In my understanding of history, the 19th century was the “human rights century,” and the 20th century was the war century, but on the other hand, it was a “century of solidarity” in the sense that labor unions and cooperatives spread and the social security system took root as a system in advanced nations. In other words, various collectives resulted from the fact that happiness was not possible just by establishing the individual.

However, this comes with a risk that collectives will become the cornerstone of aging society and even the individual established first will become ambiguous. This is the 21st century in which we live.

The “individual,” established in the 19th century, and the “collective,” established in the 20th century, both are important legacies discovered over the course of time, so this must not be denied. We will carefully protect these and nurture them appropriately to the time.

AARP discusses “Reinventing Retirement,” but considering this history and the view that people will start living to age 100, I think reinventing retirement will depend on reinventing community.

Kato: Expecting currently employed businesspeople and young people to get involved in community is difficult in reality, I think. However, local community is becoming weak and hollowed out, and I strongly fear that the good elements of local community will be lost if this continues.

I think the first priority is the rebuilding of local community by baby boomers and others, using retirement from work as one impetus for this.

Higuchi: I completely agree. This absolutely does not mean a return to a communal type of community in which the individual is obscured as in the past. While keeping the spirit of the past’s strengths, we must methodologically build a

community for the 21st century.

For the fun of it, I gave Kanji characters to the word local to mean “the elderly (= lo) can (= ca) stay (= l).” Ideally the elderly should be able to stay in his or her own place where they have always lived without being isolated within the community.

Kato: My feeling is that of course I was raised by my family, but also by the community. In a good sense, people in the community scolded me. It may be impossible to revive this kind of relationship right away now, but perhaps it could be represented in some way.

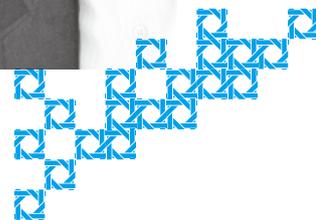
Higuchi: Rebuilding community is actually becoming a huge movement globally. In 2004, Generational Review (Oxford University Press) published a special issue on grandparents. In England, there is a grandparents association, and one reason for this is that there are so many divorced families. Grandparents have the power to

save divorced families from destruction.

In addition, as life spans increase, the power of grandparents to support daughters and daughters-in-law who are still employed has come to the fore. With higher divorce rates and longer life spans, people finally have begun to understand that the elderly are the power-holders who support the family and community.

When I visited England in 2005, I learned that the British Ministry of Education and Age Concern were working together to promote the recruitment of mentors in community elementary schools throughout the nation. Approximately seven mentors are placed in an average-size elementary school. Three documents were required to apply: (1) a police certificate that indicates no criminal history, (2) letters of recommendations from owners and/or supervisors of companies where one has been employed to the present, and (3) essay. Local boards of education and Age Concern would confer and

“ *The first priority is the rebuilding of local community by retirees* ”



make decisions.

In Kingston, a neighborhood near Wimbledon, those responsible for recruitment were excited and pleased, saying, “We finally found a gold mine of male volunteers.” Like Japan, participation in volunteer activities in England is primarily by middle-aged women, and male participation is not going very well. However, when skilled people of strong character who could academically mentor children were selected, 6 out of 7 were male, and they had backgrounds as middle school principals, veterinarians, and so forth.

The role of mentors is to help teachers in teaching classes and to care for children outside class time. For example, the school gate does not open until 8:00am according to an agreement with the Teachers’ Union, but immigrant families and other families where parents leave for work early often ask that the gate be opened at 7:00am. Mentors, therefore, open the gate and fix a simple breakfast for children who are not able to eat breakfast at home, as well as to care for children after school in the afternoon. There are many children whose parents cannot speak English, so mentors attend classes and help these children so that they do not fall behind academically.

Kato: This mentor system is excellent, because there are not just one

or two, but seven mentors. In Japan, too, school reforms, such as principals recruited from private companies, are a hot topic, but I have heard that new endeavors are often shot down. By securing a reasonable number of mentors and using the power of grandparents in the community, I think people will understand that this will lessen the burden of current teachers, and through cooperation between mentors and teachers, it will be possible to educate children really well.

Higuchi: From the viewpoint of using male influence, there actually is something interesting happening in Japan right now. In Suginami-ku, Tokyo, ordinary retired businessmen started going to cooking classes for men, and as a result, a group of friends formed. At the time, Suginami-ku was promoting a “elderly daycare service” using empty classrooms in a middle school, and in order to encourage men to go, this group of friends began volunteering there, and this became the “Shokei Fureai no Ie.”^{•3}

Kato: I’ve also visited Shokei Fureai no Ie a number of times to write about it. From the male perspective, many aspects of the elderly care environment today are not satisfactory. “In that case,” thought those men, “instead of just complaining, why not make a place

•3 **Shokei Fureai no Ie**

An elderly daycare service center operated in empty school classroom with participation by local residents. Ikigai no Kai, an NPO started by friends who met in a cooking class for retired men, was contracted by Suginami-ku and opened the center in February 2001. As suggested by the concept, “programs that satisfy the intellectual interest of men,” 70 percent of the approximately 100 registrants are male. In addition to mah-jong, go, calligraphy, and gardening, they help middle school students plant rice in school fields.



where we could enjoy ourselves.” And such positive thinking is excellent.^{•4} In addition, being involved as volunteers allows each of them to use their abilities in computer work, negotiations with bureaucracy, and other areas from when they were employed to find a new way of involvement that goes beyond the boundaries of traditional volunteering. This is very interesting.

Higuchi: Since women tend to live longer, I think it is inevitable to a certain extent for the aging society, particularly nursing care facilities, to be feminized. However, it is also necessary to consider the differences in how men and women have lived up to now. The elderly have lived with this history. That is why if elderly men provide services by using their familiarity with the culture in which they have lived up to now, I think that a certain balance will return to welfare in Japan.

Kato: Regardless of feminization, I think we need to investigate again

whether facilities today are really easy places for women to live. There are still cases of male employees assisting when women take baths, and there are many nursing homes that do not have any place to apply makeup.

Higuchi: That’s right! I think one standard for measuring the quality of a nursing home is whether or not there is a beauty salon in the home. Today’s elderly generation, particularly women, does not complain very much, so this type of desire is not likely to come to the forefront, but if men come in and start complaining, women will do the same. It is important for both to have power.

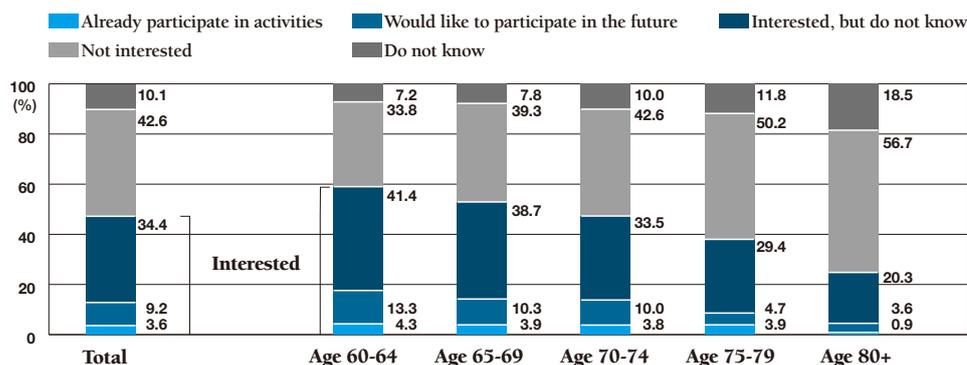
When men grow old, they end up smothered by women’s groups and just feel annoyed without any will to try break through the situation on their own.

The baby boomer generation has voiced objections since they were young, and when baby boomer retirees become involved in communities and facilities, a culture in

•4 Level of interest in NPO activities

Source: 2006 Annual Report on the Aging Society

Materials: “Survey on Attitudes of the Elderly Toward Participation in Local Communities,” 2005, by the Cabinet Office



which the elderly and facility users speak their minds will probably take root. In this sense, I have great hopes for the baby boomer generation.

Kato: Practically speaking, too, baby boomer business men are quick and good at filling in documents. Some also have communication and negotiating ability. When one becomes a member of the aging society from now on, he/she will increasingly be asked to be involved in community and facilities as users, volunteers, and ombudsmen.

Higuchi: The words, “Is there anything I can do to help?” and “If there is anything I can do to help...” are important, and they are the basis of volunteering. However, instead of only helping people through specific actions, I think it is actually very important for the elderly themselves to live happily and to build such an environment.

Perhaps this is saying too much, but I think this is the important vol-

unteer work for the elderly.

I would like to introduce one example in which everyone was able to live happily, enjoy their lives, and warmheartedly see their friends breathe their last breaths.

An acquaintance, who is a little older than I, organized a senior association in a community in Kawasaki City, Kanagawa Prefecture. Since he had been an executive officer of a company, neighbors came and asked him to be the leader, so he served as the association’s first chairman. 209 of the 400 elderly in that community became members, which is quite a membership rate. There were no bylaws and no dues, and whenever there were expenses, they were divided equally among those participating in each session. Some of the members wanted to decide on bylaws and dues, but they questioned whether bylaws were necessary for a neighborhoodly association and decided to eliminate as much administration as possible.

Everyone actively and indepen-



“ *It is very important for the elderly to live happily* ”

dently came up with activities which they were enjoying, but one member eventually died the other day. That person belonged to the karaoke group, so his wife asked each person to sing one of her husband's favorite songs when his coffin was taken from home. Everyone, led by the karaoke group members, raised their voices and wholeheartedly sang his favorite songs.

When I heard that they had cried and sang for him while remembering his life, even though they were just neighbors and not related by blood, I thought what a wonderful scene that must have been.

Kato: Hearing this makes me think that those people in Kawasaki probably want to die in their community. There's something special about being able to imagine your ending in a community where people would have such a funeral for you when you died.

I, too, have met many people throughout Japan because of my work as a critic, but there are wise

people everywhere who are running informal associations well. The presence of these wise people is very important in that they nicely build an atmosphere in which anyone can be himself/herself and walk with everyone at his/her own pace.

Higuchi: Living happily while attending funerals and visiting the ill helps people. I think it is good and natural to help people as a result of trying to enjoy life instead of making a conscious effort to help people.

Kato: That will set an example for the next generation to happily and enjoyably grow old. That is much better than saying life is a waste and boring with a long face.

However, instead of placing the burden for all of this on individual effort and mind-set, society must also think about creating a framework so that the elderly can live comfortably and feel secure.

No one is ever 100% satisfied with their current situation.



“ *By earning wages,
many elderly could be proud of
still working* ”

Everyone feels inadequate in some way. For example, financially speaking, if we are creative enough, we should be able to provide a place or a way to earn 50,000 yen or even 100,000 yen.^{•5}

The elderly may have difficulty working full-time as permanent employees. Therefore, it is necessary to create an environment where the elderly can work limited times, such as mornings only or two hours per day.

At an automobile parts factory in Nakatsugawa City, Gifu Prefecture, around ten people over age 60 work only on weekends. By working on Saturday when permanent employees are off, they can achieve balance in their lives and earn income of 50-100,000 yen per month. One year of work would make it possible for husband and wife to take an overseas trip, and like the earlier story of mentors in England, this will make both permanent employees and part-time elderly employees happy, and it will support the Japanese economy.

Silver Human Resource Centers have too many regional differences, many center managers who hail from the government bureaucracy, and too few work programs and selections to match the times.

Higuchi: The Silver Human Resource Center in Fukui City, which is headed by a female private

citizen, is establishing a new child-rearing support program. Recently, many women professionals work until the mandatory retirement age, and there are many elderly persons with credentials needed by government, such as dieticians and nurses, so it should be possible to create jobs based on a new mind-set.

Kato: Being able to earn enough money to give some spending money to grandchildren inspires the greatest confidence, so I think there should be a volunteer wage set separately from the Minimum Wage Law. By earning wages, many elderly could be proud of still working, and that will prevent the need for long-term nursing care more than anything.

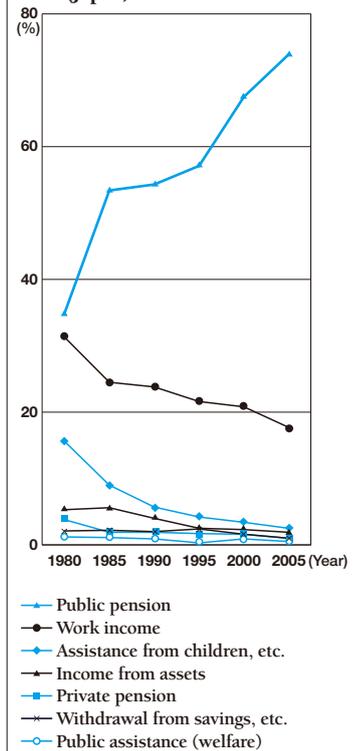
Higuchi: I think that preventing the need for long-term nursing care in this way would be the greatest contribution to society. The elderly would be able to interact with people, earn a little money, show off to their grandchildren, and contribute to society, so no one loses.

Before thinking rigidly about devising ways of effectively preventing the need for long-term nursing care, the most important thing is first for everyone to come alive by being themselves and doing what comes naturally.

(5/29/2007)

Photography: Masahiro Minato

•5 Primary income sources as a percentage of living expenses (Japan)



Source: "2006 Global Comparative Survey on the Lives and Feelings of the Elderly" by the Cabinet Office

Note: The subjects of this survey were men and women over age 60 not living in elder care facilities.



Participants:

Mariko Sonoda

Associate professor, Meiji University

Yuko Nishikawa

Professor, Kyoto Bunkyo University

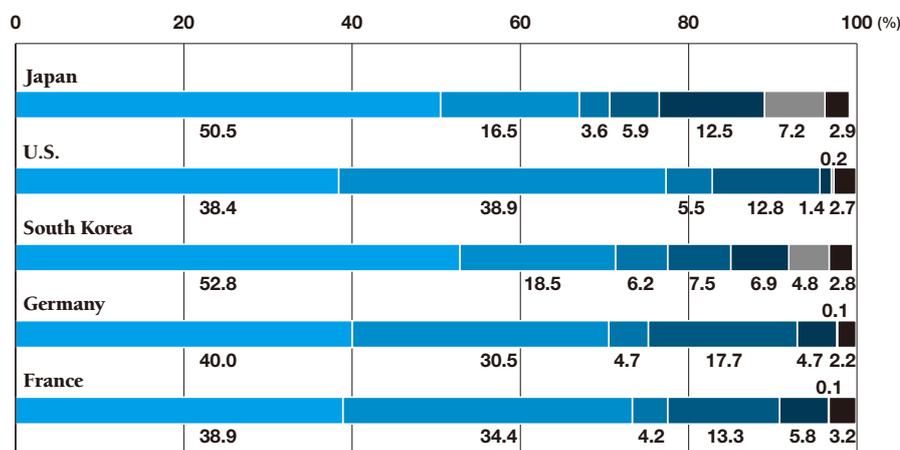
Roundtable Discussion

2

The Aging of Suburban Residential Areas: Creating New Ways of Living

- Where would you like to live when you are no longer physically able to care for yourself?

■ I want to stay in my own home.
 ■ I want to remodel my own home and stay there.
 ■ I want to move in with my children.
 ■ I'd like to move into a housing complex for the elderly.
 ■ I'd like to enter a long-term care facility.
 ■ I'd like to go into the hospital.
 ■ Other



Source: The Cabinet Office, "2006 Global Comparative Survey on the Lives and Feelings of the Elderly"

Note: The subjects of this survey were men and women age 60 and over not living in elder care facilities. The survey was conducted in Japan from November-December 2005 and in other countries from December 2005-February 2006.



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Most of the suburban residential areas known as “New Towns” developed and grew on the outskirts of major cities in the period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, as the younger generation formed households and had children. The majority of residents in these suburban residential areas were nuclear families, and for the most part the households were headed by “salarymen,” a new occupational category at that time. They created a new model for the family: a husband who worked outside the home, a wife who did the household chores, and their children.

In a short time, the members of the first generation of suburbanites will retire from their original roles and join the ranks of the elderly. As they confront their own physical aging, they have also begun to deal with the aging of their communities.

In those suburban residential areas, the voices of children are no longer heard, and residents are predominantly elderly. Do communities like this have a future? Can they regain their previous liveliness and vitality? Above all, who will continue the existence of these communities as the original residents pass on?

We’d like to look at new ways of living in suburban residential areas in this extremely gray society, keeping in mind all the angles and possibilities.

What will happen to the New Towns with the aging of the urban areas?

Sonoda: Right now, it is the major cities and other concentrations of population that are facing the problems of their aging populations. Given that the problem of aging is especially urgent in the New Towns, I'd like to consider what will happen to the urban areas.

The baby boomer men may be symbolized by the catch phrase, "Can you keep fighting 24 hours a day?" It's no exaggeration to say that they gave everything they had to their companies.^{•1} They will start retiring in 2007 and they'll be going back to their homes.

These men used to say that their homes were just places to sleep, and they concentrated on their jobs, so that they soon became strangers to their own families. First I'd like to have Professor Yuko Nishikawa talk about what will happen to these families and the places where they live, especially the suburban resi-

dential areas.

Nishikawa: I think of modern housing as a container for families, so I've been researching the connection between families and their containers. Currently, I'm studying urban areas, particularly New Towns, as an extension of my study of housing. If I were to map out my research on the modern Japanese family and housing, it would look something like this.

Before World War II, there were two main household models: the large extended family household, headed by the father or oldest brother, and the urban household, made up of a nuclear family. There were two main housing models to correspond to the household models, "houses with open hearths" for extended family households and "houses with parlors" for nuclear family households.

After the War, the urban household became the standard model for families, and at the same time, the notion of individual identity arose,

•1 Comparison of Generational Work Ethics, Characteristics of Lifestyle Attitudes

Source: Masako Amano, ed. *The Baby Boomer Generation: New Theories—Opening the Way to Relational Autonomy* (Yushindo Kobunsha), 2001, excerpt from p. 11

The Wartime Generation Born 1931-1945	The Baby Boomers Born 1946-1950
• Corporate warriors	• Company people
• Shared experience of losing the war, rising out of poverty, rebuilding the nation of their ancestors	• Faded memories of the experience of losing the war, a lowered devotion to the common good, striving to live better than ordinary people
• A lifestyle single-mindedly devoted to work	• The growth of the company is a source of happiness for the family;
• Service to the company that involves the family	• The generation that takes work assignments away from their families
• Their hobby is work; they are proud of having no other hobbies.	• Although they value their hobbies, they are still devoted to work.

along with the corresponding housing styles of “houses with western-style living rooms” and “single-bedroom studio apartments” which are occupied by the baby boomers and their children, respectively.

I think that retired baby boomer men are returning to their homes not as “fathers” but as “husbands” in a nuclear family. They didn’t return to an extended family home with a hearth or to a three-generation home with a traditional parlor, but to a house with a western-style living room, a nuclear family home where the children had grown up and left. I’d like to summarize the baby boomers in simple terms. Their time was one in which tertiary industries flourished and many people moved to the cities. It was also the time when increasing numbers of women went on to higher education.^{•2} It was the generation that experienced the first stages of women’s liberation, and ironically, the generation with the highest rate of marriage and percentage of full-

time housewives, and at the same time, the era in which the one-child or two-child family became the norm. I also wonder if this is the generation in which the gender-based division of labor, the idea of “men at work and women at home,” took hold.

The prevailing housing patterns were large urban apartment blocks and suburban New Towns. Furthermore, about the time that the children of this generation were of university age, their families encountered financial difficulties, and it was said that they needed 125% of the husband’s income to survive. Housewives’ part-time work covered the additional 25%. By the way, wages for housewives who work part-time never rise. One of the major accomplishments of feminist research is its analysis showing that these wages remain stagnant because women’s work is viewed as supplementary income.

The “salarymen” of this generation can anticipate receiving a pension in their old age, but at the same

	First generation, born 1916-1920		Second generation, born 1946-1950	
	Men Age 35-39	Employed men and women in the entire population	Men Age 35-39	Employed men and women in the entire population
Occupational composition				
White collar	22.4	15.7	28.7	32.3
Commerce	11.5	10.7	17.8	14.3
Blue collar	28.8	24.1	35.9	31.4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	27.5	40.4	3.6	9.2
Percentage of population concentrated in the Tokyo area: Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama	16 <small>(men and women age 35-39)</small>	14.8 <small>(entire population)</small>	21.9 <small>(men and women age 35-40)</small>	20.8 <small>(entire population)</small>
Educational attainment (men and women)				
Secondary education	30.3		74.7	
Higher education	6.2		22.2	

•2 Changes Between Generations in Terms of Occupational Composition (%)

Source: Yo Takeuchi, *Traces of the Dream of Popular Modernism: Varying “Refinement” and the Universities*. Shinyosha, 2001, excerpt from p. 10

•3 nLDK

This is how living units are described in Japan, with “n” being the number of rooms in addition to the LDK (a single room that serves as the living room, dining room, and kitchen). Most postwar housing was designed on the LDK model. In places like the New Towns, where gender roles were clearly defined, the “n” in houses with Western-style living rooms was “the number of persons in the family minus one,” and some people remarked that the “minus one” was the husband.

time, many of them were forced out of their jobs by restructuring.

Another problem that we cannot ignore is that many people working in the primary and secondary industries have no heirs to carry on their work and are facing the end of their family businesses and the formalities required to close them down.

As Professor Sonoda has pointed out, for about 40 years, most men were only “night time citizens” of their communities, so inevitably, women, who were “24-hour citizens” of these communities took up their management and administration. This was a characteristic of Japanese-style New Towns. The women were left alone in their nLDK^{•3} apartments which were designed specifically for a closed nuclear family, but eventually, they created links with other women. Countless networks arose out of ties forged at the co-op, at part-time jobs, at the PTA, in garden allotments, while caring for family members, or in citizens’ committees.

In the early years of the New Towns, the infrastructure was incomplete, with too few schools or roads, while a whole range of problems arose in later years: too few hospitals or facilities for the elderly, stores closing, elementary and junior high schools shutting down or being consolidated, and the deterior-

ation of high-rise apartment blocks. However, gathering together to solve these problems created even stronger networks of human relationships, and the resulting movements enjoyed some success. Participants worked hard to develop new media, including group handbills, newspaper inserts, and electronic media, including websites. This forty-year period saw a flourishing of “women and children’s culture,” led by women.

We are approaching a shift to a “women and elderly people’s culture.” Specifically, there are numerous problems connected with nursing care for the elderly. First, there’s the problem of how the wife should take care of her husband’s parents if they live far away. Second is the question of whether they should have their parent move in with them or not. Finally, there is the question of what to do about one’s parents’ funeral arrangements and final resting place. Before long, baby boomers have found that their own problems of aging are catching up to them. At present, there are empty classrooms in the elementary and junior high schools of the New Towns, while, on the other hand, large numbers of facilities for the elderly are being built in the vicinity.

In the past ten years, New Towns have often been seen as areas fraught with problems, but in fact, it’s just that the previously men-

tioned changes in the population structure due to low fertility and population aging and the phenomena associated with these changes surfaced 10 years earlier in these areas than in most parts of the country. Therefore, instead of being areas fraught with problems, New Towns are places where the issues facing society first emerge, and I wonder if we shouldn't consider measures for solving these problems in the New Towns as early attempts to solve these problems for Japan as a whole.

Even if baby boomers have withdrawn from the workforce, they still have enough time, physical strength, emotional strength, and economic security to weave together new networks, so I have great expectations of their potential. For a long time up to the present, the family has been the fundamental unit in the modern national model, but I believe that the largest issue is whether it will be possible to break away from the nested structure of "family, region, and nation" and weave bottom-up networks based on a horizontally egalitarian philosophy. When that happens, interaction between men's and women's culture, among regional cultures, and among foreign and generational cultures will be essential components. I'm looking forward to that kind of major change.

Sonoda: Unlike the "nested" structure of the modern Japanese family, the issue for the concept of egalitarianism is whether it will be possible to remake and replace the existing structure from the bottom up. Professor Nishikawa believes and hopes that this will be possible, but what do you think, Professor Kadono?

Kadono: If I may speak from my experience of conducting actual field surveys, the men are obsessed with potential challenges they may face after retirement. They think that they can't simply return to their homes or to their communities, and quite a few of them have gotten involved in activities. However, more than a few of them think that it is too early for them to be part of their neighborhood community. They base themselves in networks that they developed during their years of employment, and they try to work themselves into the community gradually instead of forcing their way in. Yet both of these groups are made of people who are aware of the problems with their situation. The overwhelming majority end up in a sort of limbo at home after retiring from the work force. It's important to consider how to get in touch with and support those retirees who are not particularly savvy about their own situations, and who don't know where to go or

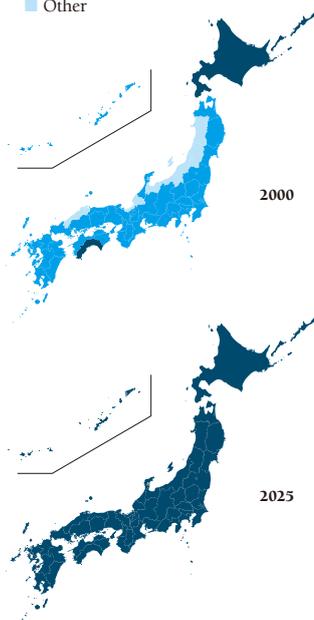
•4 People in early or late old age recognized as needing care
(Units: 1,000 persons)

Persons in early old age (age 65-74)	
Need support	Need care
126 (0.9%)	556 (3.9%)
Persons in late old age (age 75 and over)	
Need support	Need care
580 (4.9%)	2,914 (24.7%)

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare: Report on the Status of the Long-Term Care Insurance Program, FY2005.
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications: Population Estimates, calculated on the basis of figures confirmed in March 2003

•5 Housing models followed by the greatest percentage of people:

- Persons living alone
- Couples without children
- Couples with children
- Single parents with children
- Other



Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research: Future Estimates of the Number of Households in Japan (Estimates by Prefecture), August 2005

whom to link up with.

One thing we must pay attention to is the difference between the circumstances of people in the early stage of old age and people in the later stage.^{•4} Nowadays, there are all kinds of networks being created in the New Towns, but as the baby boomers enters the later stage of old age, a great transformation will take place. Will the children of the baby boomers continue with the town planning projects that their parents have envisioned? I must say that would be unlikely.

Unless new, unrelated third parties enter the picture, we will not be able to maintain these areas with just the next generation, and I believe that the lack of mechanisms to support such efforts will really be a major issue in the future.^{•5}

Sonoda: Professor Kadono has noted that there are many options for baby boomer men to find venues for action and places where they feel comfortable. It seems that there are three types of men: those who somehow settle in comfortably, those who feel self-sufficient and remain detached, and those who have come back home but don't know how to relate to the larger community and tend to become reclusive. Women may readily conform to the egalitarian concept that Professor Nishikawa talked about, but I suspect that it's more difficult for men.

Then we have to ask ourselves how to think about the earlier and later stages of old age in relation to the baby boomers. In Japan, baby boomers are many in number, but they're concentrated in an extremely small age range. Even if they're in places where they feel comfortable while they're healthy, we could have a catastrophe on our hands all at once as their physical conditions deteriorate.

So if that's the case, are the New Towns and suburbs in a hopeless state?

Nishikawa: For the individual, the family is one of the important networks, but society as a whole needs a clear-eyed recognition that the notion of linking housing and regions to blood relationships and families is already a fantasy, out of synch with reality.

When we need care, we have to have some relation with the next generation, but despite the fact that we can no longer assume that these younger caregivers will be our own children, we pretend that the elderly will be cared for by their own families, an assumption that is completely divorced from reality.

I think one of the major keys to this issue is building relationships with younger people who may be outsiders without family ties. I myself have reached the age when I may need care, and I am keenly

aware that we must create venues for learning such things as how to communicate well with other people or how people can make things easier for one another or meet one another's needs.

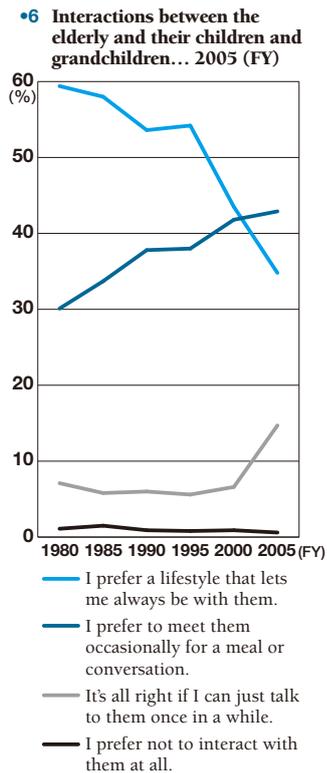
For a long time, care was entirely the job of the family, based on the fiction that family members could understand one another without speaking, but we probably need a paradigm shift, especially among the baby boomers, who have already begun to see clearly that they cannot depend on their own children.^{•6}

Will it be possible for generations to understand one another and to keep up these residential areas?

Sonoda: You've mentioned the catch phrase "paradigm shift," but questions such as whether people will be able to interact in ways that supercede family ties, whether suburban residential areas will survive and grow, and whether the process of handing them over to the next generation will proceed smoothly are of great concern to the general public, not just to elderly people. I'd like to hear what Professor Kadono thinks about matters such as interaction among generations and the continuing existence of residential areas.

Kadono: If we look at tracts of single-family houses, we find that they were built in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the so-called first generation moved onto previously undeveloped land and brought up their children. Since these areas are full of memories of those early days, residents are generally quite satisfied with their living environment. Yet despite this, they feel a long-standing yet free-floating anxiety about the environment for elder care or medical treatment. In other words, people in the early years of old age, who don't need long-term care, are already vaguely uneasy about their future in these residential areas. However, since they are highly satisfied overall, they don't particularly feel like moving while they're still in good health. During that time, their physical condition starts to deteriorate a bit, and that's when they tend to think about their future for the first time.

Another point is that people who live in areas developed between 1965 and 1985 have almost all paid off their housing loans, and a small percent of them could move out of the area if they felt like it. Alternatively, there are cases in which older people want to hand the house over to one of their children and move somewhere else. Yet these situations are in the minority. Few adult children can live with or near their parents, whether it's be-

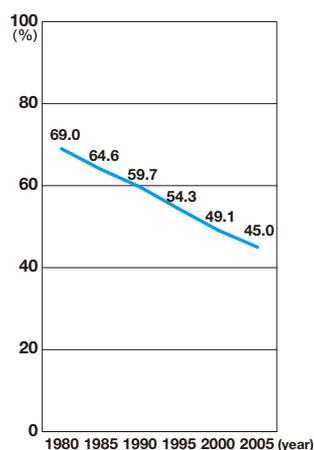


Source: Annual Report on the Aging Society 2007

Materials: The Cabinet Office, "2006 Global Comparative Survey on the Lives and Feelings of the Elderly"

Note: The subjects of this survey were men and women age 60 and over from all parts of Japan. In the FY2000 and FY2005 surveys, some respondents (7.0% in FY2000 and 6.9% in FY2005) answered, "I don't know."

•7 Percentage of elderly people living with their children ... 2005 (year)



Source: Annual Report on the Aging Society 2007

Materials: Statistics and Information Department, Office of the Minister of Health, Labour, and Welfare, Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions of People (Figures for 1980 are from Welfare Administration Basic Survey).

cause of the location of their jobs or other reasons.

Anyway, it is common for children to be living far from their parents.^{•7} So how shall we support the elderly after they are widowed? The answer is to rely not upon the children but upon people in the neighborhood, or, in other words, the networks that they cultivated while they were still in good health.

However, older people can disappear from neighborhoods abruptly. All of a sudden, a formerly healthy elderly person has to go to the hospital. In most cases, once they go into the hospital, they never leave. Their house stands empty for a while, but you can't tell whether it is vacant or not, just by looking at it. After the resident dies, the house is eventually put on the market.

Few people make the logical decision to sell a house right away once it's standing empty. They tend to have irrational feelings about their homes, and there is a time lag between a house becoming vacant and its being put on the market.

Once an existing home is on the market, we encounter the question of whether the community is attractive enough to entice an unrelated member of the younger generation to move there. Advertisements for existing homes only show the proximity to a transit station and the availability of necessary stores and services, or, in other words, the

“hardware” of the environment.

There's no information whatsoever about an area being active and lively, or about the presence of older and retired people who could help young parents take care of their children.

When young parents are asked what kind of place they would like to live in, they reply that they want to be in a neighborhood where there are other parents of their generation raising children. Mature residential areas with many elderly residents are unlikely to have children of the appropriate ages. Besides, it's only natural that young parents should give a wide berth to neighborhoods that have vacant lots and conspicuously vacant houses.

In order for mature residential areas to continue their existence, they have to appeal to families on the basis of their being good places to raise children. They have to identify what makes their area attractive for buyers on the existing home market and advertise the attractions of the community and its activities. At the same time, the buyer has to understand these. In other words, we need to recognize that it will be difficult for these suburban residential areas to survive unless they can get new people to rent or buy there.

Sonoda: I'd like us to consider what communities can do to attract buyers from the next generation. Does

anyone have any good ideas?

Kadono: In the end, it's not a matter of attractiveness as a housing development located so many minutes from a transit station. I think it boils down to appealing to buyers on the basis of the quality of life that one can enjoy living in a town or area. A New Town community alone cannot offer enough attractiveness that makes it distinct from other residential areas. If that's the case, then what is required is ideas for making lifestyle resources out of resources that are available in the areas surrounding the New Town.

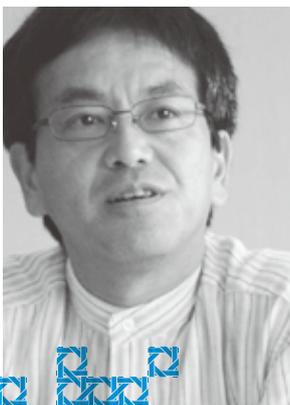
It depends, for example, on how well the community can create a "lifestyle image" for its area, based on such features as old-style villages, temples, or historic buildings, and natural features such as mountains or the sea. And in fact, the majority of New Towns will not survive unless they have systems to support this image.

Sonoda: Professor Miura, you're

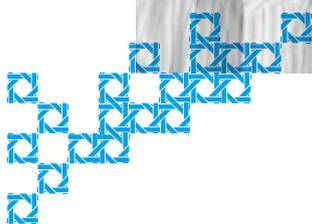
younger than the rest of us. What kind of attractions would entice you to want to live in a suburban residential area?

Miura: Like Professor Kadono, I feel that there's a time lag problem. The other day, I had a chance to talk to someone from the Takarazuka City Hall, and he said that they also wonder how they should manage houses whose owners have grown old and gone into nursing homes. Even when private care providers or NPOs ask the owners to allow the houses to be used for elder care or children's centers, they just can't accept the idea, because they think that if they rent the house out, they won't be able to get it back in the event that their son wants to live there. I think that if the city acted as an intermediary and set up a system in which it would guarantee rentals, these properties would move quite smoothly. If the public sector just gave a little bit of encouragement, the situation would change.

As Professor Kadono mentioned



“ *These suburban New Towns cannot by themselves create attractions that will distinguish them from other places* ”



before, if New Towns develop places where the elderly and children can be together, these facilities will be attractive in a way that conventional public institutions are not, and I wonder if such facilities might serve as mechanisms to transform both households and the New Towns. That might make the New Towns sustainable.

Kadono: We are thinking about moves in the similar direction though they are not yet concrete. The private companies that are brokering existing housing don't have firsthand information about the area. The real estate agents who have put down roots in that area know some things about the changes in family composition and lifestyles, but there are still no such entities in the suburban housing developments. Initially, I thought that local governments, NPOs, and other locally active organizations could be certified to take a major role in these transactions and act as intermediaries in place of real estate agents. However, that was not very practical, because these organizations knew too much about private matters. Also, it's not feasible for government to take action in the midst of a tendency toward small government.

For example, when someone is looking for a house, the head of a community association could take

the place of a private intermediary to provide advice and explanations about such non-material aspects of the neighborhood as local activities and networks. If they like it, they can contact an agent. Furthermore, we should disseminate information widely over the internet and other media, so that potential buyers who live far away can acquire such information easily. In addition, I'm thinking about developing a mechanism by which heads of community associations and people from NPOs can provide advice if the prospective buyer wants more details.

Sonoda: Those can be viewed as expanded versions of the ties forged at various places that Professor Nishikawa was talking about. If residents and private companies can form ties and create mechanisms for issuing and receiving information, the New Towns will become more sustainable.

Kadono: Since all kinds of privacy problems will arise within any single community in a town, we will have to create organizations that cover a rather wide area and disseminate information. For example, a statement such as "located along a rail line" is easy to understand and generates a clear image. I believe that if multiple apartment clusters and housing clusters can work diligently to improve public awareness

of housing along rail lines or increase their ability to get information out, this will lead to a greater likelihood of the housing areas to continue existence, and at the same time that may lead to organization of mechanisms for supporting the elderly.

Is it actually possible for elderly people to live in a community and support one another?

Sonoda: All of us already recognize that there are limits to what blood relatives can do about long-term care and community problems, but I wonder if it will really be possible to create “third relationships” that substitute for social systems and market transactions and allow people to live and support one another in communities. As an expert in elder care, what do you think about this, Professor Miura?

Miura: I think it's both possible and difficult.

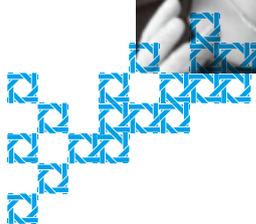
What makes this idea possible is that many intellectual people live in the New Towns who have been active in society and acquired high levels of awareness. I wonder if we can achieve new things if we combine the potential of these people. Perhaps they will find a way to use empty houses to create gathering places that form the core of the community.

Conversely, the difficult aspect is the time lag that Professor Kadono has mentioned. No one knows what to do, and there are situations in which no one can make any moves anyway until the resident dies. There are groups that make good use of their experiences and networks, and those that find the area convenient for the time being and don't make any moves. I believe that the situation in the New Towns will change considerably depending on which groups take the initiative.

Sonoda: The key phrases “can make moves” and “can't make moves” have popped up here, and



“ *New Towns can become more sustainable by setting up mechanisms for receiving and distributing information easily* ”



depending on their own circumstances, there are residential areas that can make steady, proactive moves or have the strength to get things going, and those that can't make any moves. Furthermore, in terms of individuals, there are people who can take actions and people who can't take action, and I wonder what will happen if we get a concentration of such people in a suburban residential area.

Miura: I think there will be increasing friction, not only among individuals but among areas, and it will be a terrible situation.

On the other hand, terrible situations can also serve as a motivation to change things. As Professor Nishikawa said, problems gave rise to networks. In particular, when considering how the future elderly and the baby boomers will spend the period when they need care, we may gradually give up the fantasy or fixed idea that entering a nursing home places the least burden on the person in question, for the family,

and for the community.

Probably most elderly people are beset with anxieties about what would happen if they became unable to cook for themselves or if they fell and no one noticed. Anxiety about supporting one's basic lifestyle, let alone long-term care, manifests itself in the elderly themselves thinking of paying large amounts of money to make reservations in pay nursing homes.⁸

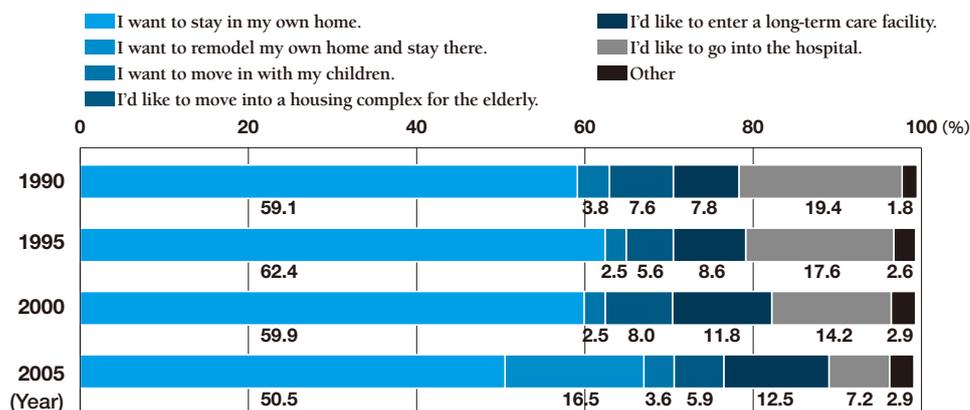
If you actually survey care facilities, you find that only an extremely small percentage of residents are receiving specific care, and a wide variety of 24-hour care services and in-home support services that take care of people in the community are starting to come into being. I wonder if building a life in New Towns or in the suburbs will become a sought-after option, so that people don't have to pay large amounts of money to enter a long-term care facility.

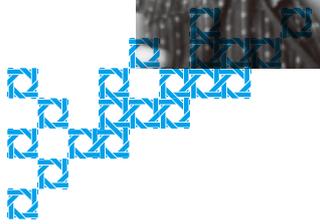
In such cases, the important question will be how the elderly can build relationships in the area.

8 Where would you like to live when you are no longer physically able to take care of yourself? (Japan)

Materials: The Cabinet Office, International Comparative Survey of Lifestyles and Attitudes of the Elderly, 2006

Note: A survey of men and women age 60 and over, excluding those who are institutionalized. The item "I want to remodel my home and stay there" was added in 2005.





“ *The important question is how to involve local businesses and residents in providing support that creates relationships* ”

Furthermore, what about the problems that people can't solve on their own? For example, as their lower limbs weaken and they can't get around very well, how will we create times when they can interact with other people?

If we work backwards from the idea of supporting elderly people's lives in the community instead of keeping them housebound, that gives us an opening toward the concept of performing functions that replace institutionalization. In other words, what we're asking in the end is how to form relationships in the community even while using public services.

For example, if one of the local restaurants has a staff that's good at creating a sense of community, then it can be not just a restaurant but a welcoming place for both children and the elderly. If the restaurant can offer care, it may perform about 80% of the functions of a long-term care institution.

Given the availability of unoccupied houses for housing stock and

the presence of people with awareness, we may be able to use rising long-term care needs as the opportunity to create a community that is friendly to the elderly as well as to the general public.

Note that all communities are strapped for resources these days, but some communities will see their lack of resources as a reason to get smart and creative and do the best they can, and some communities will give up because of a lack of resources, just relying on whatever the government provides, and not have much success.

Kadono: I agree with what you said. The New Towns have educational facilities and shopping facilities, but all of these facilities are excessively focused on a specific purpose. If we look at long-term care for the elderly, specialized long-term care facilities fulfill only a small part of the need. What's needed are schemes that allow the elderly to eat their meals in an ordinary manner, go shopping, and have fun

while enjoying interactions with others in the community, even if they have become physically weaker than before. I'd like restaurants, shopping areas, and entertainment establishments to become the kinds of places where the older elderly people who have lost some of their physical strength can enjoy themselves easily by relying on the relationships they have cultivated over the years.

I'm not talking only about existing businesses. Companies should make use of vacant lots and vacant buildings as sites for community businesses, and it seems to me that we could restructure local government support to facilitate funding for these kinds of ventures. Making it possible to develop such facilities within communities and recreating them as places that the elderly can enjoy even when they need long-term care is an essential part of community planning.

Sonoda: So it was proposed that, instead of creating completely new

businesses, maybe we should promote restaurants with especially attentive servers or convenience stores that are unusually responsive to their customers and gradually change the identities and procedures of existing entities. By doing so, conventional facilities can evolve to a very different type of place.

Nishikawa: However, don't you think that local government support will be needed? In the older cities, retail areas have gone bankrupt, leaving streets that consist almost entirely of shuttered façades, and the shopping areas near the New Towns were replaced by supermarkets. Yet even supermarkets have started to move out of these areas. Massive stores complete with parking lots have started to spring up in the outer suburban areas, and that trend is occurring throughout the country.

In reality, when we age, we will sooner or later lose the ability to move by ourselves or express our-

“ *We can't rely entirely on individual efforts and ideas alone. We need some consideration and efforts from local governments* ”

selves. Caretakers can form networks, but it's difficult to form networks of people who are receiving long-term care. We can't rely entirely on individual efforts and ideas alone. We need some consideration and efforts from local governments.

Sonoda: What have come up in today's discussion are matters that we have to think about on a number of levels, given the urgent situation that Japanese society is facing, namely, the aging of its major cities, and, more specifically, the aging of its suburban housing developments.

In order to develop a full-featured lifestyle for the elderly and a secure caregiving environment in the suburban housing developments, we first need to make a major assumption about a paradigm shift away from relationships that are restricted to family ties. It has been pointed out that, if that shift happens, it will become possible to develop networks as extension of various ties among the residents who have lived

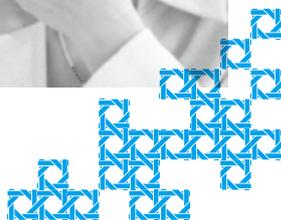
in these New Towns since their creation some forty years ago.

Once that's come to pass, transferring the housing in those New Towns and their continuation as residential areas becomes feasible. When it comes to providing long-term care, mobilizing our knowledge of how to support elderly people in the community instead of keeping them housebound makes us see unoccupied houses and very ordinary local facilities as extremely attractive resources.

If New Towns are to remain places where the baby boomers, especially the men, can continue to live and lead enjoyable lives after they quit working, we will have to rebuild relationships among people, between the government and the residents, and between private companies and the local community, to name a few. In broad terms, the direction we should take is to broaden these kinds of networks as a means of making the New Towns sustainable.

(7/30/2007)

Photography: Masahiro Minato



Participants:

Hidehisa Otsuji
 Former Minister of Health,
 Labour and Welfare
 House of Councilors Member



The Health Insurance System in Japan

Its History and Significance

• Health expenditures in OECD member nations (2005)

Country	Percent of GDP (%)	Rank	Expenditures per capita (\$)	Rank
USA	15.3	1	6,401	1
Switzerland	11.6	2	4,177	4
France	11.1	3	3,374	8
Germany	10.7	4	3,287	10
Belgium	10.3	5	3,389	7
Portugal	10.2	6	2,033	23
Austria	10.2	7	3,519	5
Greece	10.1	8	2,981	14
Canada	9.8	9	3,326	9
Iceland	9.5	10	3,443	6
The Netherlands*	9.2	12	3,094	13
Sweden	9.1	13	2,918	16
UK	8.3	18	2,724	17
Japan*	8.0	22	2,358	19

Source: OECD Health Data 2007 (final revision date: June 27, 2007)

Notes:

1. Rankings in each of the categories to the right are among OECD member nations.
2. Asterisked figures are data from 2004.

Yoshio Gyoten
Medical commentator



Japan's universal insurance system allows anyone anywhere anytime to receive advanced medical treatment repeatedly at a low cost. There now is growing concern over the future of this system, which has supported people since the end of World War II. In addition to issues such as soaring medical costs for social security, a shortage of doctors and nurses, hospital bankruptcies, and uninsured people, the essence of healthcare itself – i.e., what is good health, what is illness, what is death – is being redefined. Approximately 50 years have passed since health insurance coverage became universal. In this talk, we will look at this history and think about what we must protect now.

*A Compelling Thought from My
Personal History*

Gyoten: On August 15, 1945, when Japan lost World War II, I was a student, and the area near my house was devastated. There was nothing to eat, and of course we were not able to attend school. Anyway, because of my desire for food, I started working as an odd-jobs man at the GHQ established in Yokohama at the end of August, jumping at the chance to get three portable meals per day.

There I met some Allied Occupation intelligence officers who had studied post-occupation Japanese management and political strategy at the Harvard University Graduate School. They eagerly explained, “Japan in the future must not become a country in which illness leads to poverty, which prevents people from seeing doctors or going to the hospital, which in turn causes the illness to become even worse.” Destiny led me to meet these elite officers who showed no arrogance to the Japanese people who had lost the war, and this completely changed

•1 **American occupation policy**
 After World War II ended, General Headquarters (GHQ) adopted a policy of promoting democracy and ending militarism and ultra-nationalism in Japan. The Japanese Constitution, which was created based on a GHQ draft, shows America's strong intention to rebuild Japan as an ideal democratic state with its renunciation of war (Article 9) and right of all people to maintain minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living (Article 25). However, when the Korean Conflict broke out in 1950, America changed its policy, and Japan became viewed as an important military base.

•2 **ABCC**
 Major casualties occurred when an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. After the War, the U.S. army sent experts to investigate the state of damage. Japanese doctors joined these experts and formed the Japan-US Joint Investigation Team to investigate. Then in 1947 the ABCC was established under the direction of U.S. President Truman, and with the participation of Japan's National Institute of Health under the Ministry of Health and Welfare starting in 1948, the state of atomic bomb victims was investigated. This was reborn as the Radiation Effects Research Foundation, a cooperative Japan-US research organization, in 1975.

my outlook on life.

Later I joined NHK and have reported on health, medicine, and welfare ever since, but my way of thinking has its roots in this meeting with American military officers.

Otsuji: When I was three years old, my father, who was a Navy Major, was killed in fighting near the Solomon Islands. My mother raised me and my younger sister by herself, but life was very difficult. However, everyone around us was poor, so I can say it was an equitable society with no gap between rich and poor.

My mother worked continuously to make ends meet and died young at the age of 41. I was 20 years old at the time, and my younger sister was a high school student. I had been attending the National Defense Academy, but withdrew and looked immediately for work. However, in those days, it was not easy for a child without parents to find a job or even take a company entrance exam, so I was quite frustrated. I am who I am today thanks to the support and help of many people. I can never forget those to whom I am indebted.

I once was told by the chairman of a certain organization, "If you want to repay me, devote yourself to the people of Japan."

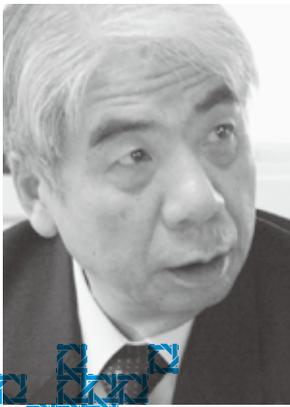
I have come this far by always keeping these words in my mind.

Gyoten: I think a universal health insurance system was an ideal for the young American officers as well. My first contact with the idea of public health beyond doctors seeing patients came from my meeting with them. The plan was to work hard in Japan on tuberculosis, parasites, mental illness, and malnutrition.

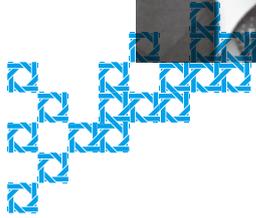
After this, the Korean Conflict started in 1950 and suddenly changed the policy of the American occupation^{•1}. As a result, the idea of the young American elite officers to create a social security utopia in Japan was derailed.

The first place I was assigned when I joined NHK was Hiroshima. The Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC)^{•2} had been established in Hiroshima, and data on atomic bomb victims had begun to be gathered, but activities focused more on collecting information than helping victims. Information on the atomic bomb already had become a major part of national strategy.

However, at the same time, the seeds sown by the young officers of the Allied Occupation gradually began to sprout. In 1961, the new Health Insurance Law was enforced and a universal health insurance came into existence.^{•3} Then continuing from the special military procurements for the Korean Conflict, the aftermath of the East-West confrontation and the special military procurements for the Vietnam War



“ Universal health insurance must be firmly maintained ”



suddenly revived Japan's economy and brought long-term peace, prosperity, and healthy long life.

Healthy long life is thought to be matter of course now, but I would like to communicate to the later generations that this happened by historical chance thanks to the enthusiasm and efforts of the Americans who presented an ideal and many Japanese who took this and built it as a system.

Otsuji: I also feel very happy that universal health insurance resulted from the hard work of our predecessors. In Japan, each person has an insurance certificate and is able to receive high-level medical treatment wherever he/she works or lives. Today's long-lived society and nation of longevity were possible precisely because this system was established and made medical care accessible.⁴

We must firmly maintain this as a treasure. That is what I strongly believe from my personal experience.

After becoming Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, I argued

consistently with the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy to support that belief. The members of the Council, regardless of their personal beliefs, seemed to be trying to pass everything through the Council with the strong-man logic that even health could be bought with money, that the wealthy naturally could buy better medical care.

Regarding health expenditures, there were proposals for an insurance deductible system that would make patients responsible for a certain amount and lifting a ban on mixing insured and uninsured treatment, but I continued to condemn this as something that would benefit only the wealthy, so I always felt as if I were sitting in the defendant's seat at the Council.

Current Situation in Japan and the U.S.

Gyoten: Given the encounter that I mentioned earlier, I personally like America very much, but unfortu-

•3 History of Japan's medical system

- 1922 Health Insurance Law is enacted (insurance for workers)
- 1938 National Health Insurance Law is enacted (health insurance by municipality)
- 1961 Revised National Health Insurance Law and National Pension Law are enacted (institution of universal health insurance and pensions)
- 1973 Welfare Law for the Aged is revised (free medical care for the elderly)
- 1982 Health and Medical Service Law for the Aged is enacted (elderly health services and medical expenses are covered by the entire population)
- 2006 Medical system reform (increase in share paid by elderly patients, prevention of lifestyle diseases)

•4 WHO health achievement level rankings Healthy life expectancy (2002)

	Rank
Japan	1
Sweden	3
Italy	7
France	11
Germany	14
England	24
USA	29

Source: WHO, OECD reports

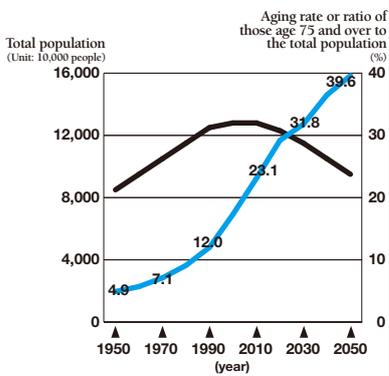
•5 SiCKO

A movie directed by Michael Moore that was released in June 2007 in the United States and in August 2007 in Japan. This movie exposes the American healthcare system in contrast with countries such as England, France, Canada, and Cuba. With its U.S. release, the movie grossed the second highest opening box office revenues in documentary history.

•6 Crawford Sams

Crawford F Sams (1902-1994) came to Japan in August 1945 as the Chief of the Public Health and Welfare Section of the GHQ. He devoted his efforts to matters such as measures against infectious diseases, the beginning of school lunches, and public health center reforms, and he gave Japan a modern public health philosophy. In 1951, he resigned and returned to the United States when General Douglas MacArthur was removed from his command.

•7 Historical and projected aging

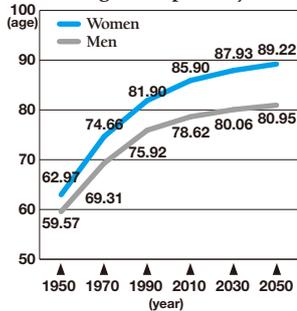


Source: Annual Report on the Aging Society, 2007

Materials: Up to 2005, the National Census by the Ministry of Internal Affairs is used; from 2010 onward, results are estimated using hypothetical median birth and death rates in the Population Projections for Japan (December 2006) by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

Note: The 23,328 people age 70 and over in Okinawa in 1955 were divided between the age 70-74 category and the 75 and over category based on the percentage that people age 75 and over comprise of the population age 70 and over in the year before and the year after.

•8 Historical and projected average life expectancy



Source: Annual Report on the Aging Society, 2007

Materials: Up to 2005, the Complete Life Table by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is used; from 2015 onward, results are estimated using hypothetical median birth and death rates in the Population Projections for Japan (December 2006) by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

nately America's greatness is becoming difficult to see, because the market principle of putting corporate profits first and America's arrogant imposition of its doctrine and point of view on others have gone too far.

The other day I saw the movie SiCKO^{•5} directed by Michael Moore. I learned from this movie that in America, where there is no public universal health insurance system, 1/6 of the total population, i.e. approximately 45 million people, live without health insurance, but even some people who actually are covered by health insurance have been treated terribly as victims of profit-chasing by some private insurance companies.

Once a person falls ill, he could go bankrupt or lose his/her life without being able to obtain medical treatment. Hospitals receive high praise from insurance companies for refusing to treat, and insurance claim processors are given a target volume of claims to turn down.

I poignantly remember the words of Brigadier General Sams^{•6}, who was Chief of the Public Health and Welfare Section of the GHQ during the occupation. He repeatedly said, "Do not become like America" and "Make Japan a country where people help and support each other more."

Otsuji: Being able to speak like that right after the War is very sharp. I

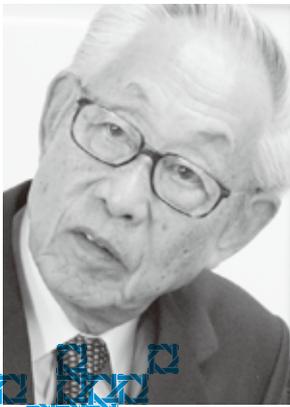
also believe that Japan is an agricultural country, and our spirit of helping each other, which could be called Japanese style socialism, has brought success, so I think we should continue with this in the future.

However, I am anxious that the same mistakes will be likely to be made in Japan as in America. Actually, now there are some people who are uninsured because they cannot pay insurance premiums, so I am concerned that the universal health insurance system in reality is starting to fail.

Gyoten: In my view, Japan's health insurance system, which provides universal coverage, is a superb system that can be regarded as this century's greatest cultural asset. All Western industrialized nations have some kind of health insurance system, but only the Japanese system has maintained a certain quality of benefits and worked for nearly half a century. The contribution of this to the Japanese people is really immeasurable.

After emphasizing this positive aspect, I am going to complain, but physicians who provide care, patients who receive care, and the remaining population who is potential patients takes universal health insurance for granted and have become dependent on it, which is actually a big problem.

In the 1970s, Japan's aging rate



“ Japan’s healthcare system can be regarded as the greatest cultural asset of this century ”

reached 7% and it became an aging society as defined by the UN. By 1993 already, the rate increased to 14.3%, and Japan became an aged society. This is a surprising speed, and rural areas in particular have become ultra-aged societies with marked population decrease.^{•7}

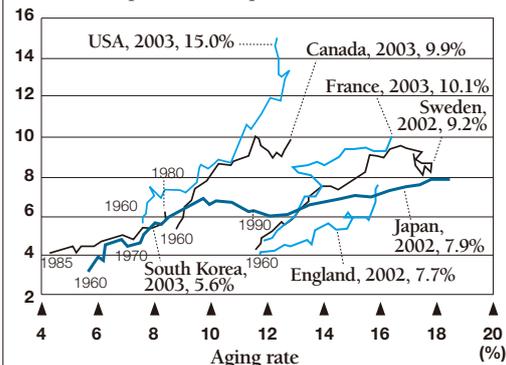
In addition, the era is finished when illness consisted mainly of acute infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid, dysentery, and Japanese encephalitis, and a person’s life or death depended on fate if he contracted such a disease. Now the majority of the population takes long life for granted. This change in social structure and consciousness requires both acute care focusing on the latest technology, as well as warm care to support the end of life.

Otsuji: In the first place, today’s pension and elderly medical care systems were designed for Japanese with an average life expectancy in the 60s, so naturally things do not add up today when people are living to age 80.^{•8}

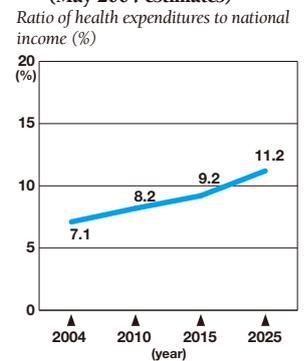
Financially speaking, Japan is in deep debt, and health expenditures that were 7% of national income in 2004 are expected to reach 9% in 2015 and 11% in 2025.^{•9} In other words, the ratio of health expenditures to Japan’s economic scale will grow. This is a major reason that medical spending is coming under stronger attack.^{•10}

The Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy claimed, “We have no money, so health expenditures will be handled as an aggregate amount.” I opposed this saying, “Health expenditures should be calculated by setting aside what is necessary. Are you telling people to die because there is no money?”

(%) Health expenditures as percent of GDP



•9 Projected social security benefits and contributions (May 2004 estimates)



Source: Projected Social Security Benefits and Contributions (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

•10 Health expenditures increase with population aging (global comparison)

Figures show data from the beginning year and most recent year, and the health expenditures as percent of GDP for the most recent year.

Source: OECD Health Data; South Korean aging rates are from population estimates by the Korea National Statistical Office.

•11 Trial concerning atomic bomb illness

Kazuo Higashi, a boy of 16 who was working in Nagasaki as part of the student mobilization, applied in 1994 for official recognition as an atomic bomb illness patient because of impaired liver function, but was denied, so he filed a lawsuit with the Tokyo District Court in 1999 and won the lawsuit in March 2004. The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare appealed, but on March 29, 2005, the Tokyo Supreme Court also ruled that it was atomic bomb illness. As a result, attention was focused on whether the next Health, Labour and Welfare Minister, Hidehisa Otsuji, would appeal, but on April 11, 2005, the Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare announced that it would not appeal.

Japan is not a culture like America where “winning is right.” It is a culture where right must win. However, I am very concerned that a violent way of thinking is suddenly entering Japanese society under the pretext of “regulatory reform,” in which winning by competing is acceptable and the market will decide who wins and loses.

If regulatory reform goes too far, the law of the jungle will prevail, and so I think the time has come to stop once more and think about whether self-responsibility and ex-post facto checks are really acceptable. Realizing after someone dies that a mistake was made is too late. I think that exposing social security, especially medical care, to the market principle is completely incongruous with the Japanese consciousness.

Since the time of Prince Shotoku, Japanese culture has respected harmony. With decentralization and privatization, conflict between national and local and between public and private has become a concern. Instead of conflict between central and local, public and private, we need to come up with a policy for

cooperation in which the roles of each are re-acknowledged and the good points of each are used.

Japan's Challenges in the Future

Otsuji: Some politicians are leaders and some are consensus builders. I myself am a consensus builder who wants everyone to get along as much as possible. Both types of politicians carry the various experiences, history, and culture of a community, and are elected as representatives to make political decisions. That's why I think it is good to have a wide range of experiences, including difficulties if possible.

Thinking intellectually and moving forward logically may appear at first glance to make sense, but this is far removed from the feelings of real people. Marie Antoinette is famous for once saying, “If they have no bread, let them eat cake!” If people like Marie Antoinette start running politics, what exactly will happen to Japan?

When I was the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, the



“ *Medicine is a benevolent art.* ”
Such doctors are becoming hard to find

Japanese government lost a lawsuit involving atomic bomb illness¹¹, and I had to decide whether or not to appeal. Technical officials from the medical field argued, “It is medically impossible to say or determine that bombing alone is the conclusive cause of the illness involved in the trial.” I replied, “That may be the case medically, but they have lived dozens of years fearing that they would become ill sometime, so the bombing politically could be a cause of the illness.” Ultimately, we did not file an appeal.

Technical officials, in their capacity as doctors, and administrative officials each have a professional responsibility to explain their views. In response, politicians have the role of making decisions as politicians. I believe that fulfilling one’s responsibilities and roles is the right thing to do for the people in the end.

Gyoten: There are also more opportunities to think about death in this line of work. Even people who have reigned over society as leaders feel loneliness, pain, and fear of death as a single human being when they be-

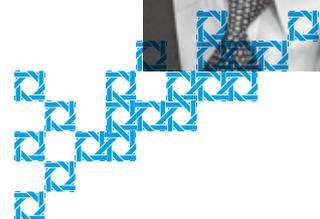
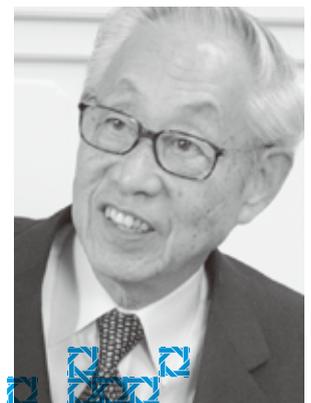
come ill, and the healthier and stronger they were, the deeper this anguish is.

A doctor in whom one can place complete trust at such a time has a very important job in society. Mr. Otsuji, what do you expect most of a doctor?

Otsuji: There are doctors who run after money, but I always want doctors to value the spirit of medicine as a benevolent art. As a child, I was examined by a nearby village doctor and found money in my medicine bag when I got home. When I hurried back and asked the doctor about this, he said, “I put in the medicine that will work best.” Of course, this alone is not a benevolent art, but there were many doctors like this. Even now there must be many doctors who believe medicine is a benevolent art, and many provide treatment while sacrificing their own lives. However, such doctors are becoming hard to find.

Gyoten: I think a change in how patients think is also necessary. Everyone will die regardless of

“ We must understand that the system, healthcare, doctors have limits ”



whether a person has great wealth or makes every possible effort to remain healthy. We must understand that there are some things in this world that money and effort alone cannot control.

For example, many people believe that even if they fall ill, they will return to normal if they see a doctor and get medical treatment, but we must realize that medicine is not almighty and doctors are not Superman. No matter how perfect a healthcare system is, if we do not understand that everyone will surely die, we will tend to develop the outrageous belief that death was caused by the system or the attending physician. This in reality is unnecessarily intimidating medical professionals.

Otsuji: No system, including the healthcare system, can be without inconsistency. I basically think that Japanese have excellent qualities, but one negative aspect of Japanese is their tendency to decide that everything is bad just because there are ir-resolvable discrepancies or very small vices.

If 99 out of 100 persimmons on a tree are sweet, the tree should be called “sweet,” but if someone finds one sour persimmon, he says, “This isn’t sweet. You lied. Apologize!” Why can’t he think that the persimmon tree fulfilled its role very well by producing 99 sweet fruits? He makes a fuss over finding one sour

persimmon and ends up denying the fact that sweet persimmons were produced.

In my impression, our current Diet debate tends to be an exchange of unproductive arguments like this, and honestly speaking, I sometimes feel emptiness.

A good example of this is the issue of selling of Employees Pension hospitals and social insurance hospitals. In the context of discussing the wasteful use of pensions, they were handled on equal terms with buying golf balls and determined to be wasteful spending. Rejecting the sweet persimmons, i.e. welfare pension hospitals and social insurance hospitals, just because there were sour persimmons, i.e. golf balls and Greenpia resorts, is just like saying to cut down the whole tree.

I was the chairman of the Health, Labour and Welfare Division, so I tried to argue that hospitals are a bastion of reassurance for local residents and that their logic was unreasonable, but I was vastly outnumbered.

I was left wondering what was important and whether that decision was really the right one, and I myself still think that the hospitals should be kept somehow.

Gyoten: As someone who has been involved for a long time, I think we must also reflect on the state of the mass media today. Though there is

freedom of discussion, everyone tends to run in the same direction and pace, and I fear that they may end up knocking down the persimmon tree all of a sudden. Perhaps journalists do not study enough, but often their arguments are overly emotional and they speak as if they alone are right, so it is difficult to calmly have a principled and insightful debate.

I am concerned that if doctors and public officials are bashed too much, there will be a decline in young people who want to take up these professions, and this will deal a body-blow to the future of Japan.

If we do not recognize that there are honest people who live according to their own convictions in the mass media world and among public officials, doctors, and lawmakers, and if we do not aim for a healthy society of mutual trust, society will have to pay the cost after some short-lived fussing, just the same as the issue of hospital closings.

Otsuji: Japanese are exceptional people for having made this country what it is. Everyone must continue trying to nurture the persimmon tree and humbly be grateful for its fruit.

Instead of eating persimmons grown and harvested by someone else and calling them sweet or sour, I think now we need to try our ingenuity at how to make sweeter persimmons and how to produce more

persimmons.

Some years bring sweet persimmons and some sour, and some years there are many and some few. The virtue of the Japanese was to share and support each other through good and bad years.

When I finish my current term, I will reach the mandatory retirement age for Diet members, so I will retire, but during the rest of my term, I want to strongly advocate for helping each other as my philosophy.

Gyoten: As I listen to you speak, I realize amazingly that although we have never met before, our lives have crossed paths in the context of upholding the universal health insurance system, and because of this, we have been given the opportunity to think about Japan together.

As I said at the beginning, my starting point is in a universal insurance system in which everyone helps each other. The wonderful Americans whom I met after Japan lost the war and who taught me that this must not be thwarted for economic reasons would certainly be surprised if they saw America today.

I had almost given up on people who claim that putting the economy ahead of everything else is the global standard, but Mr. Otsuji, your words have encouraged me, and now I think that I will continue to say what needs to be said. (10/10/2007)

Photography: Masahiro Minato



Participants:

Sachiko Murata
Welfare journalist

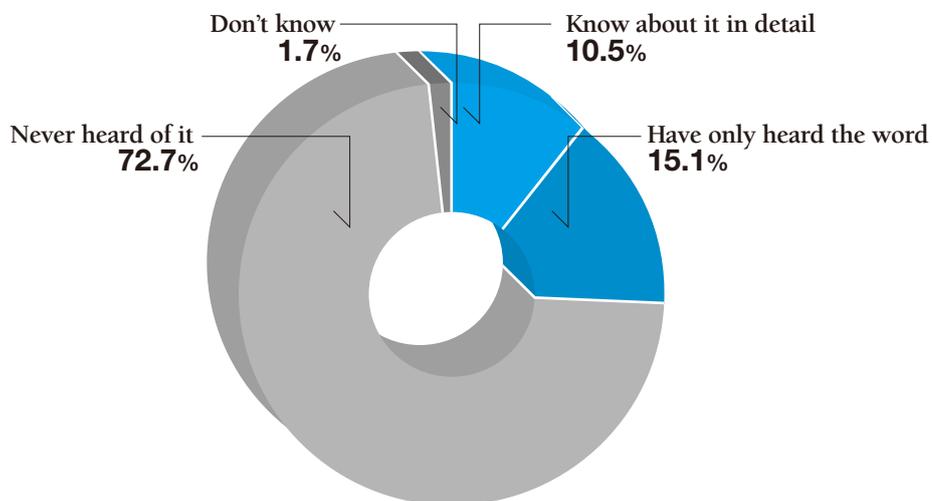
Makoto Arai
Professor and Dean of Tsukuba
University Law School

Roundtable Discussion

4

The Adult Guardianship System and Human Rights of the Elderly

• Do you know about the adult guardianship system?



Source: Based on the "General Survey on Dementia and Disclosure of Diagnosis" by the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology (April 2004). 2,000 people were surveyed.



Hiroshi Kanekawa

Executive Director, Japanese Association of Certified Social Workers

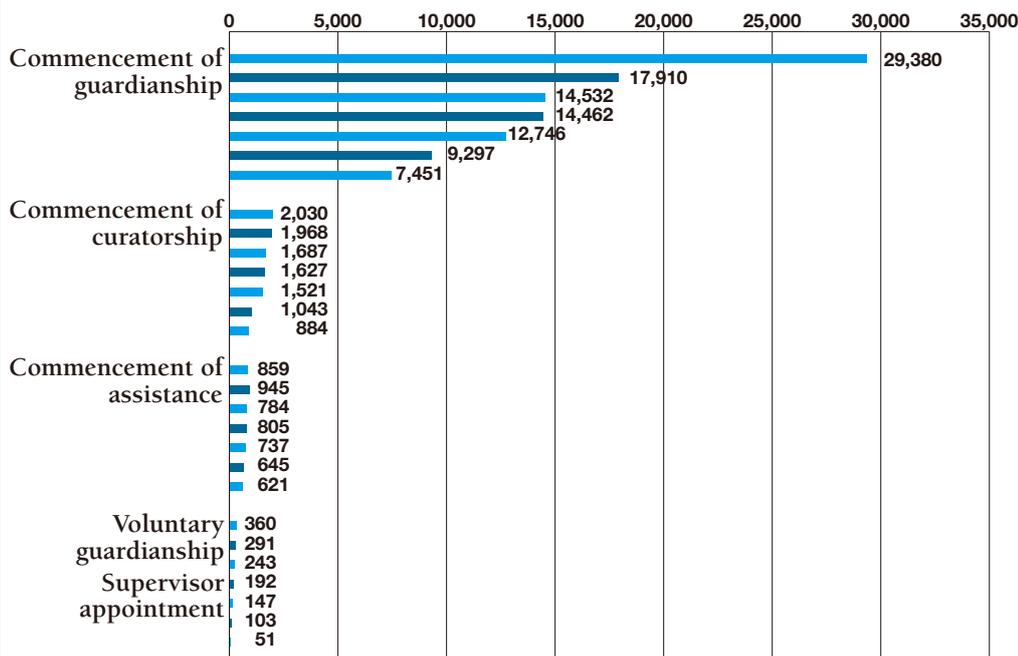


Sachiko Takagi

Senior Staff, General Affairs Welfare Division, City of Machida

In Japan, the world-class long-term care insurance system has become entrenched in the life of the elderly, but there has not been much use of the adult guardianship system that started at the same time. As the number of seniors with dementia increases, this will be important for ensuring that the elderly can make their own decisions, lead a dignified and appropriate life, and be protected from infringements on their rights.

In this talk, by referring to examples overseas, we would like to discuss the problems of the current adult guardianship system and think about how to ensure more use of this system.



•1 Number of petitions for adult guardianship

- 2006
- 2005
- 2004
- 2003
- 2002
- 2001
- 2000

Source: Overview of Petitions for Adult Guardianship, April 2006-March 2007, Family Bureau of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Court

Note 1: The number of cases for each year is the number of petitions from April of that year through March of the following year.

Note 2: A total of 5,610 signed voluntary guardianship contracts were registered from April 2006 to March 2007, and the cumulative number of registrations from the 1st year to the 7th year is 20,548.

•2 Concept of normalization

This is the concept of protecting the lives of disabled and elderly persons as members of society as much as possible instead of separating them as a special group. Specifically, this means creating an environment and conditions where these people can live a normal life with ordinary people in the local community instead of putting these people in institutions.

•3 Legal guardianship and voluntary guardianship in Germany

In Germany, when the Adult Support Act was revised in 1999, there was a departure from the system that heavily relied on legal guardianship. This is a return to the idea of respecting self-determination, and also from the viewpoint of reducing Support Act related expenses upwards of EUR580 million, voluntary guardianship is recommended. There are approximately 600,000 people who use the voluntary guardianship system.

Number of people who use legal guardians in Germany

Source: Bundesministerium der Justiz: Justizstatistik GU 2 der Amtsgerichte 1995-2005, erg. Mitteilung der Württ. Notarlate; Auswertung: Deinert

Murata: Eight years have passed since the start of the adult guardianship system to protect the assets and lives of seniors who have impaired judgment. Over 4.5 million people have been certified as needing long-term care under the long-term care insurance system, which started at the same time, and half of seniors receiving certification, or 80 percent of those in care facilities, have dementia. Despite this, only 120,000 people use the adult guardianship system^{•1}, which I must say is much too few.

Given these circumstances, I would like to look at whether the human rights of seniors are really being protected and what the current status and problems of the adult guardianship system are.

First, I would like to have Mr. Arai provide an overview of the system.

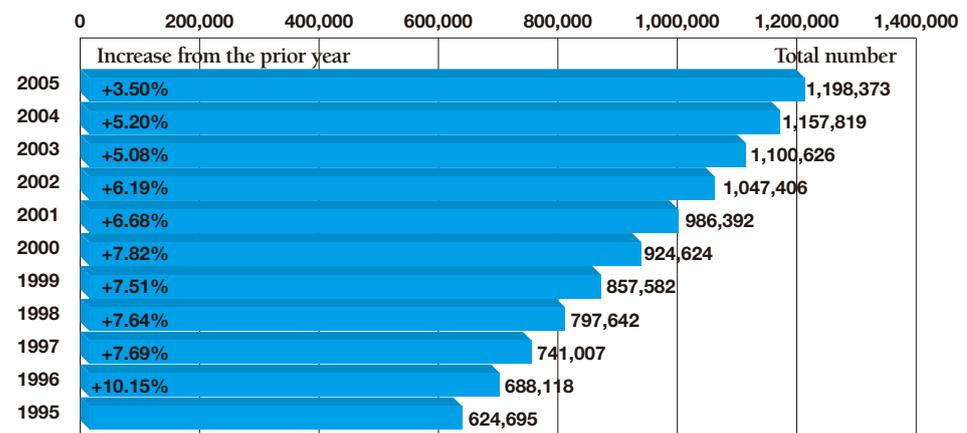
Arai: The adult guardianship system was established under a new law created in 2000 based on the German Adult Support Act

(Betreuungsetz). In the past, there were an incapacitation system and quasi-incapacitation system as predecessors of the adult guardianship system in Japan, but these were used more for the intentions of those around an incapacitated person than to protect the individual rights of the person himself. Furthermore, it was a very problematic system in that a notation would be made on a person's family register, and it constitutes grounds for disqualification so that rights of incapacitated persons would be limited. At any rate, it was decided that the word incapacitation causes discrimination.

Therefore, the name was changed to "adult guardianship," and there was a new start with this system.

The most important part of the philosophy behind this system is the concept of "normalization"^{•2}. This concept started in Northern Europe and is already well established in the welfare field.

The German Adult Support Act began in 1992 eight years before



Japan, and 1.2 million people out of a population of 82 million use legal guardians.^{•3} Use in Japan is only one-tenth of this, which is the lowest use among advanced nations. The standard is said to be 1% of the population, so in Japan where the population is 120 million, 1.2 million people would normally use the system.

Murata: Recently there has been news of seniors with dementia being conned by dishonest businessmen, nursing care patients being abused, and pensions and real estate being swindled by relatives, so the need for this system is urgent.

The reported cases are probably just the tip of the iceberg, but Mr. Kanekawa and Ms. Takagi have actual contact with people who have impaired judgment ability and their families, so I would like to ask them about the current situation in the field.

Kanekawa: First, I would like to mention the difficulty of physical custody. In the past, I became a guardian for a wealthy elderly woman. It was case in which her four children were divided two against two in their opinions about nursing care. The two sides each insisted that they would be the guardian and take responsibility for her care, so as a social worker I received a request from the family court.

The woman's children were divided on everything, and when cancer was found in their almost completely bedridden mother, one side wanted to use all medical means to keep her alive as long as possible, while the other side did not want her to suffer any longer. In this example, the guardian has no right to decide^{•4}, but in any case, it would be difficult to say which side is right.

Furthermore, on the surface this seemed like an issue of physical custody, but actually it was the prelude to an inheritance dispute, and now five years have passed since the woman died, but her estate still has not been settled either in arbitration or court.

There had been trouble between this woman and her children in the past, and this came to the surface as she got older, but the guardian could do nothing about it. This is just one example, but various problems are brought into the adult guardianship system.

Takagi: In the City of Machida, there are many apartment complexes that were built in the 1950s and 1960s, and an increasing number of dishonest businessmen seem to be targeting seniors who live there alone.

For example, a small note containing only a cell phone number and a message saying, "You can

•4

In physical custody under the adult guardianship system, consent to medical treatment is personal to a person, and therefore, like consent to surgery, it is not included in the authority of the guardian.

borrow money easily,” is put in the mailbox of an elderly person repeatedly. The person then casually calls the number because he/she comes up a little short with just his/her pension that month. He/She intended to borrow ¥30,000, but he is only lent ¥20,000 after the ¥10,000 fee, and with interest he is billed ¥50,000 the following month.

Moreover, the lender comes for the money in the middle of the night.

It’s nice that there are kind electrical appliance stores that come to change just one light bulb, but when I went to an elderly person’s place, he/she was living alone but had two large refrigerators, a TV, and an air purifier. He/She was forced to buy all of them on credit.

There are also cases of group abuse. A group of friends comes to invite one of the members who suffers from memory loss to go out. Then the person is forced to pay for meals and even souvenirs. They seem all nice and chummy at first, so it is difficult to detect.

We organize seminars about the

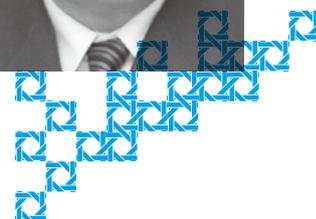
adult guardianship system for social workers and employees of community comprehensive support centers, although there still needs to be done more, so I think that this is recognized by people in the field as one option to resolve problems.

Why doesn’t this system take root?

Murata: The City of Machida is a progressive municipality that is actively working on use of the adult guardianship system, but in Japan overall, the system still has not taken root. The philosophy of the system is excellent, so why doesn’t it take root?

Arai: At first, it was said that the system feels discriminatory. People are worried that they will be labeled as incompetent if they use the adult guardianship system. However, now that the word “dementia” is said so much, I don’t think this is a problem any more. I think it is rather a matter of the legal con-

“ *It will be difficult for the system to take root unless the consciousness of society as a whole is fundamentally changed* ”



sciousness of Japanese people. I cannot help but think that Japanese people clearly lack the desire to protect one's rights by using laws and systems.

People fiddle with their cell phones in areas where cell phones are prohibited on trains, and if you say anything, you may be falsely accused of groping. The fact that there are far more people with strategic bequest motives in Japan than in the United States^{•5} suggests that Japanese people are self-seeking. People probably think that people with impaired judgment are just being incapable, so why is it necessary to protect their rights.

I have a feeling that it will be difficult for this system to take root unless the legal consciousness of society as a whole is fundamentally changed.

Murata: There may be a lack of consciousness, but perhaps there is a resistance among us living normal lives to say loudly that we will use laws to protect our own rights. I

have a feeling that people also have a hard time petitioning to the court.

Kanekawa: That's right. That's why I don't think we need to shout difficult words such as human rights. Simply said, it is a matter of protecting a person's life. We may lack the custom of respecting people as humans even if they have a disability, but the law is a means for protecting a better life and it should be used well.

Takagi: The overwhelming majority of people who actually come to consult with me believe that their families will somehow help them if something happens to them. Often the idea does not occur to them to protect their lives themselves. Even in the case of multi-generational homes, it is not understood that a parent's assets belong to the parent and cannot be touched by the child. In many cases, people first realize this when a parent's judgment becomes impaired and they are considering use of the adult

Bequest motives	Japan	U.S.
Ways of thinking consistent with the life cycle model		
(1) I want to make an effort to leave a bequest if my children care for me in my old age.	6.4	3.4
(2) I will not make any special effort to leave a bequest to my children, but if assets remain in the end, I will leave them as a bequest.	69.3	51.1
(3) I will not leave a bequest to my children.	5.0	2.9
Subtotal	80.7	57.5
Ways of thinking consistent with the altruism model		
(4) I want to make an effort to leave a bequest regardless of whether or not my children care for me in my old age.	19.3	42.5
Subtotal	19.3	42.5
Total	100.0	100.0

•5 Japan-U.S. comparison of bequest motives

Source: "Japan-U.S. Comparative Survey on Savings," Postal Services Research Institute, 1995

Remarks: Shows the percentage of respondents who have each way of thinking. Unit: %. The number of non-respondents is excluded from the denominator.

guardianship system upon recommendation by a bank or such. In the case of parents with disabled children as well, there is a widespread belief that the parents can do anything.

Murata: Lack of information is another cause of this low level of understanding. Why, when the long-term care insurance system is understood by almost everyone, is there so little information available about the adult guardianship system?

Arai: Compared with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare which has jurisdiction over long-term care insurance, the Ministry of Legal Affairs which has jurisdiction over the adult guardianship system has a lower budget. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare spent a lot of money on publicizing long-term care insurance, and the mass media reported on long-term care insurance frequently.

Meanwhile, the adult guardian-

ship system is only explained in a simple pamphlet. This is quite different from the situation in Germany, which makes many different pamphlets and even teaches about the system in schools.

Murata: The long-term care insurance system and the adult guardianship system are “two wheels of one cart,” but they are quite skewed.

Another reason that the adult guardianship system does not take root may be that people cannot imagine themselves using this system to live with the support of a guardian. I was able to see people actually living this way when I went to Germany, but how can Japanese people get an idea of what it is like when there are so few examples around them in Japan?

What are things like in Machida where the system is used more?

Takagi: I do not have specific figures for the number of users in the city, but Machida has a population of approximately 410,000, and

“ *The long-term care insurance system and the adult guardianship system are “two wheels of one cart,” but they are quite skewed* ”

there are over 400 new consultations per year. This suggests that many people want to use the system.

When the system first started, it was hard even for field workers to get the image, but employees at care facilities would see the case of one resident and think they may be able to use it for another resident, or a case worker would realize a new the scope of his/her job because he/she tried but was not able to reissue a bank statement that his/her client had lost, so he thinks about using the guardianship system.

However, care must be taken, because when it is hard to picture, people often panic due to incomplete information. When the system was first introduced, I was explaining the system at a certain pay nursing home, and the residents started to panic when I said employees of the home could not sign contracts or manage savings on behalf of the residents if their judgment became impaired. The employees also had not studied and did not know much



about this.

Compared with then, there is quite a bit more information available now, so I think people have more knowledge and can get a picture by looking at actual examples.

Problems with the system and its management

Murata: We have to get the adult guardianship system to take root, but we cannot make progress without addressing problems. What are the problems with the current law?

Arai: The biggest problem is that guardians do not have the right to consent to medical procedures. The physical custody part is downplayed to a striking extent. There is no advanced nation where consent for medical procedures is not clear. The Ministry of Justice says it is not necessary, but it definitely is necessary.

What is the point of becoming a guardian of a nursing home resident if the guardian cannot even provide consent for a flu shot?

Another problem is that we just made a law, but failed to make a framework for that law to work. In Germany, a budget is allocated, and the courts, welfare administration, and private companies work together to make the system function.^{•6} In addition, the law has been

^{•6} If a guardian is appointed, the guardianship court in Germany is required to meet with the ward and examine the situation. As part of the administration, Guardian Support Centers, upon being consulted, have the authority to ask the court to assign a guardian and to challenge the guardianship court. Guardian Associations recruits volunteers, does training, and so forth.

reviewed and already revised twice, and now it is in the process of being revised a third time. Japan has reviewed the long-term care insurance system, but not the adult guardianship system. The system cannot be operated flexibly while solving current problems like this.

Kanekawa: I think there are problems at each stage, but first is the petition stage. In Japan, petitions are made by relatives as a general rule^{•7}, but petitions by the local mayor, which are allowed for people without relatives and people without the support of relatives, are vastly different depending on the locality. There are places like the City of Machida whose mayor actively makes petitions, but there are also places where not even one petition has been made yet. Even though Japan has a usage support system in place, this is a voluntary task of local government, so it all depends on the willingness of the mayor.

Also, the cost is a problem. It

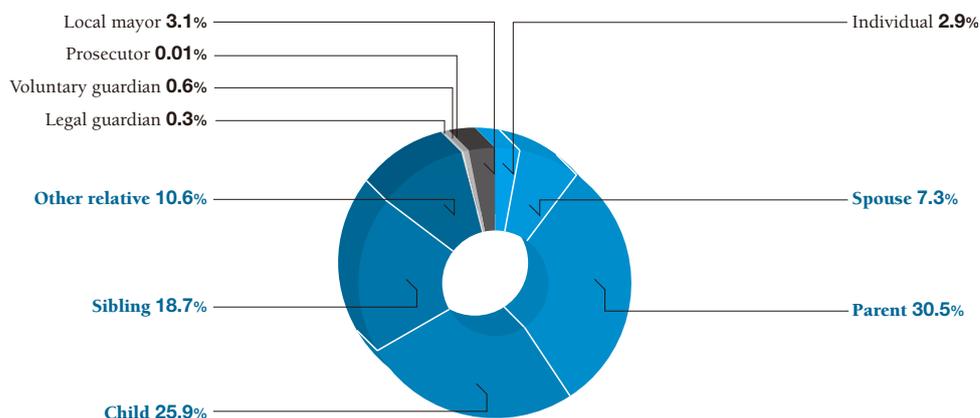
costs tens of thousands of yen to petition the court, obtain family registry documents, and have a medical certificate issued. In addition, assessment fees are ¥50,000-100,000. Under the system, these costs are to be paid by the petitioner, not by the individual. If there is a third-party guardian who is not a relative, compensation for him is also an issue. Thus, in reality, it is quite difficult to get a guardian for someone without financial means.

Takagi: In Machida, the start-up of the adult guardianship system came from senior citizens. This is an effective system for both the welfare of the disabled and livelihood protection of the economically challenged, but it was started by senior citizens. A budget was allocated, and working laterally in a vertical organization, explanations were made to other departments. As this was being done, the General Affairs Welfare Division was established and became the contact point for the entire adult guardianship sys-

•7 Percentages of various relationships between petitioners and individuals in adult guardianship cases

Source: Overview of Petitions for Adult Guardianship, April 2006-March 2007, Family Bureau of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Court

Note: These are the percentages of the total 33,112 petitioners in cases to commence guardianship, curatorship, assistance, and appoint voluntary guardianship supervisors from April 2006 to March 2007.



tem. Now mayoral petitions exceed 60 cases and are increasing.

I am prepared to go to any meetings and lectures upon requests, no matter how small those are. In addition, I organize meetings of guardians appointed as a result of mayoral petitions, where information is exchanged. In this way, the system is gradually taking root in Machida.

Murata: There currently are very few cases of professionals becoming guardians. The overwhelming majority of guardians are relatives or family members, but is this really the best way?

Arai: Legally speaking, the adult guardianship system is part of family law. In Japan, traditionally the elderly are usually cared for by their families, so to a certain extent this cannot be helped. However, given the trend toward the socialization of guardianship, I think it is difficult for families to provide care on their own. The socialization of guardian-

ship means that guardianship should be supported by society as a whole, because guardianship requires a professional level of expertise and families have a conflict of interest. In the future, I think a guardian should be someone other than a family member.

Some conservative people say that this will sever family relationships, but that is not true. The extremely difficult job of guardianship is left up to professionals while family relationships are preserved as is. It can be thought of in the same way as long-term care insurance. We need to have national debate on this in order to build up the system.

Kanekawa: In addition to problems with the law itself, people in the field cannot keep up with the system. For example, courts and legal professionals have always very strongly believed in protecting assets. It is difficult for them to think about protecting life itself.

Asset management is relatively clear-cut, but physical custody



“ *Many problems have been brought into the adult guardianship system* ”

problems are not something that can be resolved by the authority of courts. It becomes necessary to realize that both sides are correct.

Therefore, when providing care for a person's life, problems should be resolved with a welfare-type mind-set rather than the law. In adult guardianship, it is the worldwide trend to emphasize not only asset protection, but also respect for life.

Murata: Dr. Bernd Schulte of the

Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Social Law also said that social workers rather than legal professionals should be the main players of this system and that they would focus on training social workers in the future.

Arai: Legal professionals can manage assets, but they have not received training in how to use these assets in physical custody, so they have limitations. Recently some lawyers have started to become certified as social

Process in the City of Machida 2001

One year after the adult guardianship system was established, the Machida Adult Guardianship System Support Program was started by the Nucleus Type In-Home Care Support Center under the Senior Citizens Nursing Care Division (currently the Senior Citizen Welfare Division).

Reason

At the Nucleus Type In-Home Care Support Center, I visited difficult cases along with in-home care support centers in the city and coordinated between the facilities and relatives. In cases where judgment ability had declined due to dementia or the like, it was difficult to confirm the wishes and monitor the situation of an individual, so problems often became complicated, and we sensed the need for an adult guardianship system.

Likewise, in cases where judgment is lacking due to mental disabilities and psychiatric disorders, there was potential demand for an adult guardianship system, but the problems were not as apparent or pressing as for the elderly.

Therefore, rather than spending time on coordination in each department, we decided to start first from departments dealing with the elderly, where the need was felt.

workers, and some have formed non-profit organizations where lawyers and social workers work together on adult guardianship. I think this is a very good trend.

Takagi: There also are problems with doctors. A medical certificate and assessment report are required to apply to use the system, so a doctor's cooperation is necessary, but doctors still lack understanding. If a doctor refuses to provide a medical certificate for a hospitalized patient,

essentially an application cannot be made. In cases where someone is being abused by a family member, workers at a Community Comprehensive Support Center go to consult the doctor, but sometimes are told that the consent of all family members is necessary.

What is necessary for the system to take root?

Murata: After eight years, the

Process

From 2001 to 2004, the system was handled by the Senior Citizen Welfare Division.

However, during this time, consultations and mayoral petitions for disabled persons surfaced, and employees in charge at the Senior Citizen Welfare Division started doing consultations and visits together with case workers in charge of disabilities. In addition, the Senior Citizen Welfare Division was paying expenses necessary for mayoral petitions, and practically speaking, it became difficult to manage the system within a vertical bureaucratic framework divided by recipient category.

Therefore, the relevant departments had discussions and decided to move the operation to the General Affairs Welfare Division in 2005.

Current status

Consultations and assistance with petition procedures are handled not only by the General Affairs Welfare Division, but also by Community Comprehensive Support Centers in 15 locations throughout the city for senior citizens and by Hikari Ryoikuen for disabled persons. At consultation locations, forms for submitting to family court are available, and explanations on the system and how to fill in forms are given. Also, if necessary, they contact legal support and other professional support organizations, as well as accompany people to family court.

The General Affairs Welfare Division provides training and support for these contact locations.

adult guardianship system seems to be at a turning point, but I want it to take root as soon as possible like in Germany. What is necessary for this?

Takagi: I think there are two things.

One is to more widely publicize the system and get people to understand how effective it is. Contact points also should be not only at administrative institutions, but also in places nearby. It would be great if people are referred to consultation places at financial institutions, medical institutions, and so forth. In Machida, we made 10,000 pamphlets containing a simple Q&A and a map of Community Comprehensive Support Centers, and we distribute these to all entities for the disabled and elderly and to all the financial institutions in the city.

The second thing is support for guardians. Professionals receive support from organizations to which they belong, but I would like

to somehow offer support to the family guardians as they constitute overwhelming majority. Citizen guardians, which are a recent development, also need support.

Murata: In Germany, if a family member becomes a guardian, he/she is provided training and taught exactly what needs to be done and why. In Japan, they are just left to fend for themselves in a sense. I think it would make quite a difference if they could take a seminar even for only one day.

Kanekawa: I also think it is time to start thinking about a global standard for the adult guardianship system. We should incorporate the good points of advanced nations and correct the system's deficiencies.

There are municipalities that still have not made much progress in adopting the system, as well as municipalities like Machida that are top-class. I hope that cities and villages like Machida will increase not

“

We need a system that supports family guardians who make up the sweeping majority”

only for the elderly, but also for the disabled.

Arai: I think we should change our mind-set on publicity and use methods that stir up national debate instead.

For example, how about having Namihei Isono in the TV show “Sazae-san” suffer from Alzheimer’s or performing *The Rose of Versailles* on the Takarazuka stage with Fersen suffering from Alzheimer’s?

Anyway, unless we publicize it in a completely new way, even though we make pamphlets on the adult guardianship system available, no one will read them.

Also, there is a shortage of personnel, so the citizen guardians of which Ms. Takagi spoke will definitely be necessary in the future. I have high expectations for the baby-boomer generation. However, if organizations can be formed at will and do as they like, there could be problems of abuse, so this must be prevented. Therefore, a system like the German Guardian Associations

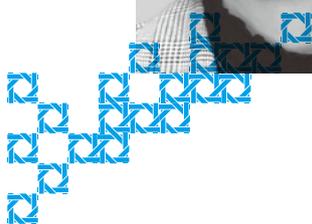
should be adopted in Japan as soon as possible. Religious organizations, groups of young people, and others could do this. How about having the government make standards and provide subsidies?

The Japan Adult Guardianship Law Association is planning to hold a world conference in Tokyo in 2010, and we would like to discuss the path which the Japanese adult guardianship system should take in the future. If possible, we would like to prepare and propose an official framework. We should compare our system with those overseas and quickly improve whatever needs to be improved.

Murata: Despite the fact that a good law was enacted, there are still some unrealistic aspects. We need to resolve the problems one by one and make the system more productive.

(4/7/2008)

Photography: Masahiro Minato





Participants:

Takeshi Sasaki

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Tokumi Odagiri

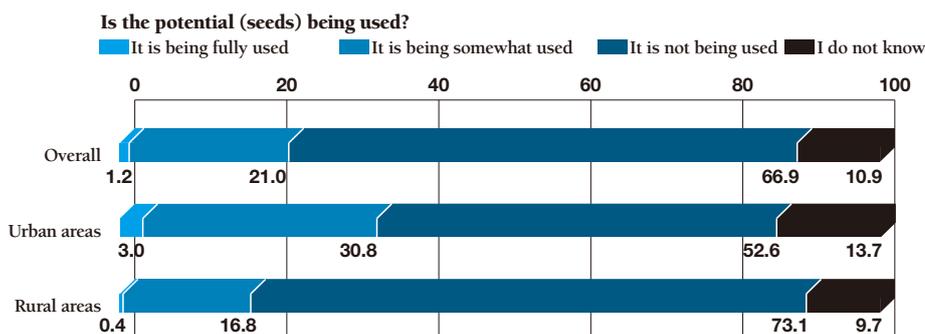
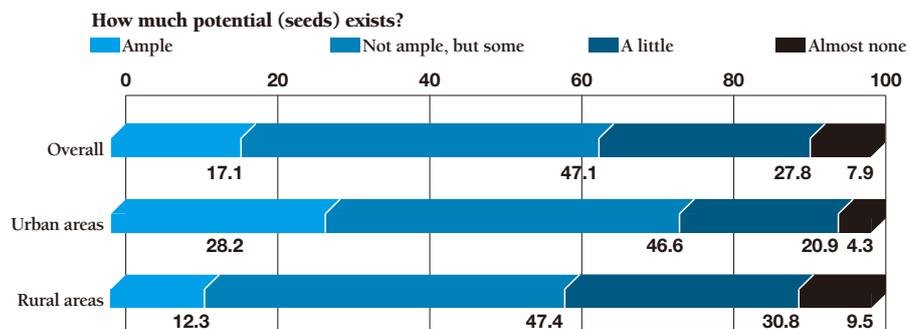
Professor, Meiji University
Member, Self-Supporting Zone Study Panel

Roundtable Discussion

5

A New Form of Local Community

• Potential (seeds) for economic revitalization in rural residential areas



Source: Based on the "General Survey on Dementia and Disclosure of Diagnosis" by the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology (April 2004). 2,000 people were surveyed.



Mitsuo Makino

Mayor of Iida City in Nagano Prefecture
Member, Self-Supporting Zone Study Panel



Yoshinori Yamaoka

Professor, Hosei University
President, Japan NPO Center



Michiko Mukuno

Professor, Oita University

With the declining birthrate, aging of society, population decline, and financial distress, the environment in Japan's rural areas is tough. The serious situation in rural areas shows a glimpse of urban areas in the future. Although there is potential for economic revitalization, this potential is not being fully realized. What can we do to really energize rural areas? Based on practice and research from various perspectives, we tried to find some tactics.

Problems of rural areas and the concept of self-supporting zones

Sasaki: Currently rural areas are in a very difficult situation economically, socially, and in some cases culturally. The outflow of people to urban areas does not stop. The Self-Supporting Zone Study Panel was started under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications with the aim of stopping the plight of rural areas, and I served as the chairperson.

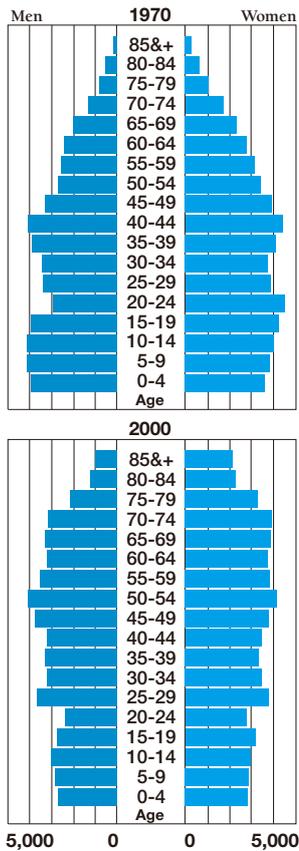
The report on the concept of self-supporting zones was completed this May, and in the process of debate, many interesting proposals were made on how rural communi-

ties should function in the future.

One of these questioned and raised issues on the dualistic idea of large urban areas (represented by Tokyo) vs. rural areas. We ended up debating whether it is really correct to think that rural areas are in trouble while urban areas are secure. A very interesting viewpoint was presented that today's rural areas rather show a glimpse of urban areas in the future.

I thought the most important viewpoint was that the dichotomous idea of cities vs. rural areas may be causing the current inability to act. So what should we do to generate activity? It is necessary for rural cities, towns, villages, and other local governments to combine

• **Changes in Iida's population pyramid (population in the current city limits)**



their strength with that of the private sector in order to change this dichotomy with a mechanism that promotes circulation between the two.

Makino: This dualistic way of thinking about urban vs. rural is unfortunate. Even large urban areas in Kansai are losing people to Tokyo, so rural areas futures as regions are in grave jeopardy.

In addition, we have entered an age when the birthrate is declining and the number of elderly is increasing, so the number of young people, who would leave rural areas, is rapidly decreasing. This trend is particularly noticeable in intermediate and mountainous areas.

There is debate about whether young people could be fully employed within a region, but this also is difficult. In the case of Iida, approximately 80 percent of youth who have graduated from high school leave the region. This cannot be stopped. Therefore, instead of stopping it, the challenge is to cre-

ate an environment to which they can return. In the Southern Shinshu region including Iida, this means that industries must be created to which young people can return.

That is where the idea of economically viable self-supporting zones for local governments started.

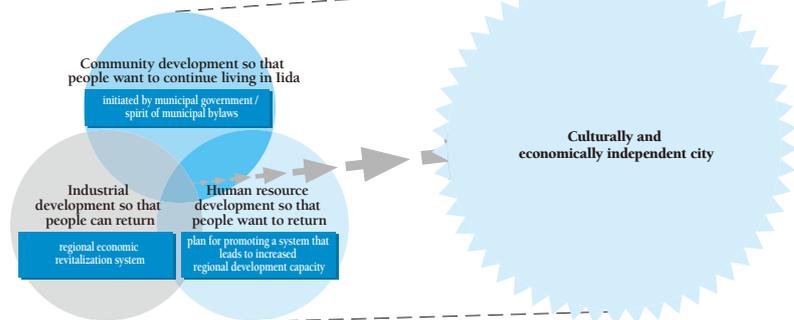
During the high-growth era, if young people went to Tokyo and entered a good university and a good company, their lives would be secure, and parents in the countryside were content if their children and grandchildren were happy. However, now there is no such life-long security. Residents of rural communities have started to think it was a big problem that young people who have left the area can not come back. This gives me the sense that values are beginning to shift significantly.

The city of Iida's goal to be a "culturally and economically independent city" is based on the idea of achieving a good balance among community development, industry development, and human resource

•1 **Iida's Efforts (prepared by the City of Iida)**

*Integrated Approach to Achieve a Human Resources Cycle
What will the development of human resources, community and industry in the 5th Basic Concept and Plan lead to?*

Integrated Approach to Achieve a Human Resources Cycle
What will the development of human resources, community and industry in the 5th Basic Concept and Plan lead to?



development^{•1}, while at the same time aiming for “cultural independence.” This shows their resolve to not cause any erosion of pride in regional cities.

This kind of effort definitely cannot be done by government alone, so local residents will need to become actively involved in the challenges that face the communities where they live. Iida started a new system and framework^{•2} based on this way of thinking last year.

Odagiri: My expertise is in agricultural economics, which is in the field of applied economics. However, since 20 years ago, I have thought that it was necessary to go beyond the field of industrial economics and look at community more broadly, so I established the field of rural policy. Regarding the dichotomy between rural and urban areas that is being discussed, recently I have developed a strong desire for debate in the larger context of rural governance.

Unless we think in a broad con-

text, we will overlook essential issues, and in this sense, I heartily agree with the idea of self-supporting zones.

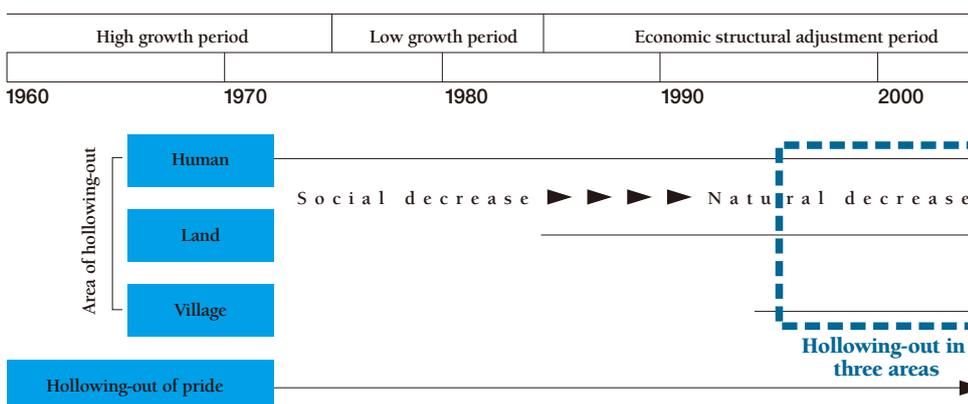
I think there are four problems in farming and mountain villages now.

The first is the phenomenon of depopulation.^{•3} The hollowing-out of rural society, which began in intermediate and mountainous regions, is spreading widely, including to small and medium-sized regional cities. The hollowing-out of population, land, and villages leads eventually to a “hollowing-out of pride.” Mayor Makino has already touched on this, but if the pride of continuing to live in a region and supporting a region is lost, though not readily visible, it is actually a very big problem.

The second problem is that the phenomenon of the “severely depopulated village” is rapidly spreading in intermediate and mountainous regions where hollowing-out started.

The third is that economic and industrial problems also have

•2 With “diverse actors” (citizen participation) as a keyword, Iida established assembly-centered municipal bylaws rare in Japan, as well as the 5th Basic Concept and Plan painting a future image of Iida as a “culturally and economically independent city with radiant people and nature where people want to continue living and try living.” The city thus is actively pursuing city administration under a new system.



•3 History of hollowing-out in intermediate and mountainous regions (diagram by Mr. Odagiri)

become very serious. Incomes are declining much more severely than expected.

The fourth is that as mergers between cities, towns, and villages occur, particularly in rural villages that have merged with large cities, town and village offices have become farther away, so some residents feel that they have been left behind by the central city. City halls also are unable to keep an eye on such peripheral areas, so it is difficult for the government to understand the local challenges of these peripheral areas.

Mukuno: I came to Tokyo to attend university and joined the Ministry of Health and Welfare after graduating. I worked there for 30 years and then returned to my hometown of Oita two years ago and work at a university now. At the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, I was engaged in developing medical and nursing care systems, and the biggest challenge in recent years has been the shift to community care

and in-home medical care.

However, even if care service and medical service are in place, if the “town” does not function in reality, community welfare and in-home medical care will not work. I keenly felt that we must begin with community development and human resource development so that the elderly and disabled could live without anxiety, so now it feels rewarding to be directly involved in rural areas from the standpoint of research, education, and practice.

Unlike the rapid economic growth period, now companies can no longer take care of employees and their families after they retire. In addition, the increasing trend toward single people and elderly couples living alone will continue, and it will be impossible to avoid a decline in the welfare role that families play. In this context, the importance of community will increase all the more. I have declared that I am doing community development for my own old age, but I sense every day that rural welfare cannot be



“ *The hollowing-out of pride in living in a region and supporting a region is a serious problem* ”



“ *Today’s rural problems may be the problems of cities in the future* ”

successful just by depending on the system.

I am particularly concerned about the issue of mobility. In rural areas, people depend on their cars, so users of public transit are sharply decreasing along with the population decrease. In particular, bus lines continue to shrink or be discontinued. Pressured by shopping centers, neighborhood stores also are disappearing, so when people grow old and become unable to drive a car, it will be suddenly difficult for them to do even their daily shopping, and they will also lose contact with society. In a survey by the City of Oita, the top thing lacking in rural life was busses and other means of transportation. Securing mobility and transportation is a requirement for independence.

If there is no human exchange with large urban areas, then it is clear that rural areas will have difficulty breaking away from their current circumstances. I myself was very lucky, and it is not necessary to

have the same salary and so forth as in the city, but jobs that can provide a decent living are needed. How can rural areas create these? Also, in cases where a couple returns to the husband’s hometown, there is the question of whether it is an area where his wife thinks that she can live, which is actually a serious matter.

I can empathize strongly with Dr. Odagiri’s “hollowing-out of pride.” With regard to Oita, for example, the old city of Beppu is a great place with historical buildings and a strong community, and when I take acquaintances from Tokyo there, everyone is impressed and pleased, but local people do not see the greatness at all. In particular, young people do not like such “old, dirty” houses, so they leave there and build houses with new building materials in new housing developments in suburbs cut into mountains.

As a result, the old city is aging and declining immensely, and even elderly people who have lived there

since long ago are losing their pride and love for the place where they live. When revitalization is mentioned, people say that they want this or that from another place to be brought here, but if, for example, condominiums are ineptly built just to increase the population, the community instead will be torn apart. Enhancing the community's uniqueness, that which exists only there, is the way to bring back pride. I think this is also related to the issue of identity.

Yamaoka: I used to do urban planning and have visited many regions. Now I specialize in community development, welfare, and NPOs.

Over the last 5-6 years, I have met people in every region who have moved back from cities to the countryside and started NPO activities. The “I-turn” pattern (moving from a city to an unrelated rural area) seems common among young people, while the “U-turn” pattern (moving from rural childhood home to a city and back again) and “J-turn” pattern (moving from rural childhood home to a city and back to near the hometown) seem common among older people. In cases where the turn home or elsewhere does not go well or the person leaves after several years, I think that there must have been limitations in many areas. What can be done by turning home or elsewhere is a big question.

There has been particular focus on the issue of post-retirement for the baby-boomer generation, and the way in which to live after retirement will always be an issue even after the baby-boomer generation. When a person decides that he or she wants to retire and return to the countryside, it is important to think about how to arrange things so that it is possible to return. One option is an NPO.

Creation of a New Economy

Sasaki: The current difficult circumstances in rural areas cannot wait, but what should be done exactly? And what movements are occurring?

Odagiri: I would like to mention three issues from the standpoint of rural governance.

The first issue is building new communities. Now we are seeing the second largest community boom since the 1970s. These new communities are not geographically-based communities and neighborhood associations, but rather a combination of geographically-based connections and function. Therefore, so-called “hybrid” communities completely different from before have formed.

The second issue is the severe hollowing-out of industry in rural

areas due to deteriorating economic conditions. This is causing a need for new economies. Mayor Makino's challenge is just this. If I may summarize this challenge in my own way, I think that four types of economies would be possible.

The first type of economy is called the "Sixth Industry." It is the primary industrial sector + the secondary sector + the tertiary sector. Simply said, domestic agricultural and marine production is 12 trillion yen and imports are 3 trillion yen, for a total of 15 trillion yen, but this becomes 80 trillion yen when it enters our mouths. The "Sixth Industry" is what was devised so that this difference could be recouped by the countryside. It started with agricultural processing, but now there are farm village restaurants, and this is a growth industry in farming and mountain villages.

The second type of economy is an "exchange industry-based economy," such as green tourism. One aspect of this industry is that through an encounter between a guest and a host, both parties grow. As a result, there is a high repeater rate at farmhouse inns and so forth, and the potential of this as an industry is not small.

The third type of economy is an "economy based on preserving rural resources." In this case, a narrative is unfolded from the countryside and found empathy

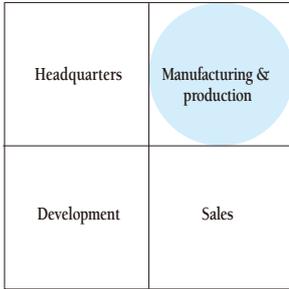
among city residents. Without the empathy of consumers, it is impossible to sell somewhat upscale products. Therefore, among products made in rural areas are those made while doing one's best to protect the rural environment, for example, products made of wood from forest-thinning. This process became a narrative and is succeeding at attracting the empathy of consumers.

The fourth type of economy is the "small economy." When people in rural areas are asked how much additional monthly income they need, elderly respondents answered 30,000-50,000 yen, and young respondents answered at most 100,000 yen. How many small economies of 360,000-1,200,000 yen per year can be created in rural areas? First it may be best to create a small economy and then hope that a medium-sized economy develops so that young people can settle down there.

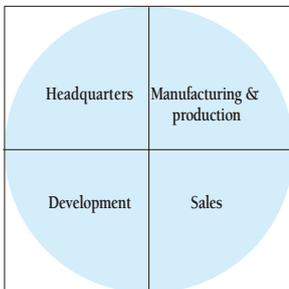
The third issue from the standpoint of rural governance is self-supporting zones. Despite being told to just protect agricultural and mountain villages, this is impossible when villages are becoming depopulated. The speed of decline in small and medium-sized regional cities is unusually fast, so it is extremely important to revitalize rural areas as zones.

Yamaoka: Dr. Odagiri mentioned

•4 Working toward 70% economic independence
(made by the City of Iida)
Internal reform is necessary in rural industrial structure to achieve 70%.



Current status of businesses, farmers, etc. (dependency)



Goal

the “small economy,” and I think that if NPOs can be used to make small loans, say from several million to 10 million yen in rural areas, then rural economies will become more active.

Whether by I-turn, U-turn, or J-turn, the fact is that it is difficult to become part of a community based organization. So we need to develop a financing mechanism, independent from these organizations, and through such mechanism, foster unique businesses. If start-up funds at the least could be supplied, then the management ability and networks developed in cities could be used and widespread activities could be conducted.

When making a turn back to a rural area, instead of depositing one’s retirement bonus in a major bank in Tokyo, we want people to deposit it in a regional trust bank or agricultural cooperative bank so that the money may benefit the locality. Merely bringing back a retirement bonus and pension to one’s

hometown will boost the rural economy.

In lively communities, there are many interesting NPOs. By making efforts such as conducting activities in rural areas while appointing former colleagues and friends who live in large urban areas as members, I think a confluence of people will develop. At any rate, that kind of dynamism needs to be created.

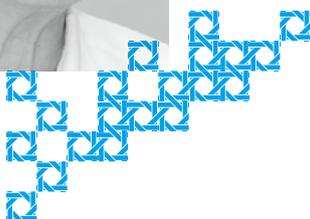
Dynamism from a Confluence of People

Makino: Within the discussion on the concept of self-supporting zones, my biggest emphasis has been the creation of just such dynamism. And in order to create dynamism, it is necessary to shift from dependence to independence in production.^{•4}

In both agriculture and industry, everyone is good at making things, but that alone is not enough. There must be a headquarters function, research and development, and



“ Simply bringing back a retirement bonus and pension to one’s hometown will boost the rural economy ”



most importantly, good marketing that can sell products with appropriate value added.

Rural industry promotion policies up to now have only emphasized bringing in factories and increasing the number of building sites in any way possible without considering and analyzing these aspects. As a result, there are many residents who have absolutely no interaction with the local community in their lives, and money does not stay within the region.

In the City of Iida, various people are learning by trial and error to create their own region by themselves. They somehow got started. However, dynamism will not come from this alone. In the end professional assistance is necessary, but unfortunately there are almost no professionals in the countryside.

Young people have left their rural communities and are getting professional education. There are also many people in the baby-boomer generation who are working as professionals in the Tokyo area. It is

important to figure out how professionals trained outside their rural communities can be connected with their communities. Forming committees of consulting firms, intellectuals, and others, and asking them to revitalize regional city centers often does not work well, but this is only natural in a sense, because unless professionals are involved with the community on a long-term continuous basis, success cannot be expected.

Iida is focusing heavily on attracting human resources in order to generate dynamism.^{•5} One specific example of this is Mr. Kaburagi^{•6}, who came to Iida from Tokyo and made Kabuchan Noen a big success. He traveled throughout Japan and by chance he discovered he had a liking for Iida, so he began living there. As a result of his success with Kabuchan Noen, Iida's Ichida dried persimmon farming business really changed dynamically.

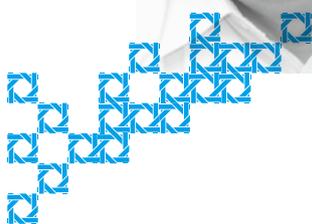
In my own experience in Frankfurt, urban planning professionals and

^{•5} The City of Iida aims to achieve the Tenryu Gorge 100-Year Renewal Plan by exchanging and training personnel through a partnership with the City of Bungo Takada, which rebuilt its city center as "Showa Town." Iida also is calling on urban planning professionals from overseas in a partnership with the City of Wurm in Germany.

^{•6} **Kabuchan Noen**
Ichida dried persimmons, a traditional food of Southern Shinshu, were branded by Takeya Kaburagi and became instantly famous throughout Japan. While advertised in newspapers and on TV, he also refined storage technology, which made it possible to sell Ichida dried persimmons throughout the year instead of only in late December and early January as in the past. As a result, sales in large urban areas grew dramatically.



“ Outside professionals must be involved to create dynamism from a confluence of people ”



architects debated outspokenly on community development, and a sort of tension between professionals achieved a good effect. In Japan, I get the impression that professionals actually are not used very well.

Of course, some professionals are elderly. Mr. Matsushima, Cluster Manager for the Iida Shimoina Local Industry Promotion Center is a 73-year-old engineer who came from Tokyo. He remained in Iida after retiring as president of a clock assembly company in Iida and is working in the forefront of the aerospace industry, a new industry for the region. However, as Dr. Mukuno worried, he left his wife in Tokyo and is working here on his own, this kind of relation of families will be a major issue in the future.

Yamaoka: If you were going to start up a company, I really think it would be best to retire early around age 50 and make a comeback. Many people with appeal have come together in the city of Iida, but there are other places that are also working to create accepting communities.

In the City of Shimanto (formerly Nakamura City), where I have been involved for the last several years, the Nakamura Chamber of Commerce publicly recruited an executive director. Chambers of commerce normally function like

second-class administrative offices and are not very active anyplace, but there were several hundred applicants for this position, and a man in his 50s who had worked at a trading company in Tokyo was selected.

He said that he applied for the position because he found the place appealing, and as soon as he took the position, he partnered with NPOs and community people and began study sessions. He moved forward with activities while respecting existing community-based networks, and the organization clearly has come alive. The Chamber of Commerce fulfills an important role in the community, so this should energize the town as well.

In all regions of Japan, the pillars of the community – namely chambers of commerce, societies of commerce and industry, social welfare councils, and boards of education – all are sectionalized and disjointed, so they do not even have contact, let alone partnership. If they



worked together to stop golden parachuting and publicly recruited personnel, there could be major change in communities.

Hire Outside Professionals as Managers

Mukuno: I think there has to be some matchmaking in order to attract people. Invitations thus far have concentrated on the idea of somehow bringing in industry that can do something for a community, which was really a dependent way of thinking. In contrast, Furusato Kaiki Shien Centers^{•7} and others attract people by saying something like, “There’s nature here and the food is good, so come bring your retirement bonus and pension to this village!” This is a little different from the active personnel recruitment that leads to economic independence. In addition, women are asked if they would like to be a farmer’s bride. After all, there are women who do not want to be

brides, but are attracted to farming villages.

Of course, both men and women will be paid a salary, and there are plenty of things to do in the area, so won’t you come once you are free of your children? Being able to do this kind of marketing would be good. In places where pride is being lost, the tendency is to think that no one would want to live in such an unattractive place, but outsiders may be able to discover interesting and rewarding things from a new perspective.

Odagiri: Community development is actually human resource development, and this is easy to understand by applying the words “operator” and “manager” used frequently in agriculture. An operator is someone who does labor, while a manager is someone who uses his knowledge to manage.

For operators, the concept of productive aging is a matter of course, and agricultural cooperatives and local governments since the 1980s

•7 Furusato Kaiki Shien Center
The Center supports middle-aged people, including the baby-boomer generation, in I-turns, J-turns, and U-turns in order to achieve success in the “Million Person Movement to Return to Rural Hometowns.” Centers have been established throughout Japan in addition to the national Furusato Kaiki Shien Center NPO.

“ *There has to be some matchmaking to attract people, the kind which leads to economic independence* ”

•8 Unified Headquarters for Regional Revitalization

Four headquarters relating to regional revitalization (Urban Renaissance Headquarters, Headquarters for the Promotion of Special Zones for Structural Reform, Headquarters for Regional Revitalization, and Headquarters for Revitalization of Central Urban Districts) were consolidated in order to achieve an effective and easy-to-understand framework from the regional perspective. The goals are to propose across-the-board strategies for regional renewal, create action plans, and implement policies in an organized and comprehensive manner.

have begun to train people who have reached retirement age and come back to the countryside so that they can support agricultural productivity. The phrase “return to the farm at retirement” was also coined at this time. In addition, there also is debate over changing the term “severely depopulated communities” to “lifelong working communities” instead, and it can be said that there are many healthy senior citizens with low medical expenses in Nagano Prefecture thanks to the underlying strength of operators engaged in primary industries.

The problem is with managers. Under difficult circumstances, we definitely need to recruit managers from outside or develop a system for sending in outside personnel.

Now, in farming villages, people frequently speak of human assistance rather than monetary assistance. Not only money, but also human resources are important, and ideas that support this did not exist in Japan before now, but finally it seems a framework is beginning to be put in place gradually. Financial authorities hate most of all spending money on people, because this tends to lead to perpetual assistance, but they finally have begun to realize that rural areas will not change unless this is systematized.

A typical example of this is the “Rural Revitalization Program” of

the Unified Headquarters for Regional Revitalization^{•8} created in the Cabinet Office last autumn.

Here business proposals are solicited from rural areas, but instead of only monetary assistance, counselor-level bureaucrats from national government ministries are also sent to provide human assistance.

The same program is spreading to the Forestry Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. In this respect, Iida’s initiative was a true breakthrough.

Sasaki: In rural areas up to now, the government and geographically exclusive society have been inseparably intertwined. Meanwhile, there are places like Iida, where not only geographically exclusive society, but also open people have begun to be active. While a new “wind” is born, many places remain where there is still nothing but government and geographically exclusive society, so this problem needs to be addressed in the future.

Far from hoping for revitalization through public recruitment for manager-type positions, there are even many places where the rotation of appointments is determined for the next 10 years. This is very primitive, but the stronger geographically exclusive society is, the stronger resistance to outsiders is.

However, even in such places, if just one opening can be made to gain access, there is a chance for change.

Once the level of Iida is reached, wariness toward incoming outsiders can be shifted instead to tension in a good way. Bringing exclusivity to the point of tension is the first stage, I think. The next stage is to use this well in order to create a win-win relationship.

While deliberating on self-supporting zones, I had two thoughts regarding this issue.

One is to think of the next choice when one reaches a certain age.

In my view, post-war rapid growth was an anomaly in Japanese history. However, because this anomaly was used as a model, we got bogged down. Senior citizens today including the baby-boomer generation were lucky enough to experience this one-time historical miracle, but this should not be used as a model for success in the future.

It is only natural to work hard at a company, but it is also important to use one's imagination for options in one's life afterwards. Humans need a running start, so unless they practice from a young age using their imagination to think about what is next, they will be at a loss when they actually grow old.

The other thing is that, just as there is Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program, which sends youngsters overseas, there needs to

be a program for matching mature adults who want to do domestic volunteering with regions that want such people. The City of Iida has done things in Mayor Makino's way, but I think there are things that can be done even in places with strong geographical connections.

The last thing to consider is that I think there has been too much hype over globalization in recent years, particularly in the financial world. In light of the lives of Japanese citizens, I want to reiterate that we need to think from multiple perspectives, and that the viewpoints and challenges in rural areas epitomized by "small economies" are especially needed now.

(8/6/2008)

Photography: Masahiro Minato

Participants' List

Makoto Arai

Professor and Dean of Tsukuba University Law School

Makoto Arai was born in 1950. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at Keio University and earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Munich University in 1979. Prior to his current position, he was a professor at schools such as the Faculty of Law at Kokugakuin University and the Faculty of Law and Economics at Chiba University. He is the President of the Japan Adult Guardianship Law Association and received the Humboldt Research Award in 2006. His publications include *Adult Guardianship Law in Aged Society*; *Adult Guardianship Law and Trust Law*; *Asset Management Systems, the Civil Code, and Trust Law*; and *Trust Law* (all published by Yuhikaku).

Yoshio Gyoten

Medical commentator

Yoshio Gyoten was born in 1926. He graduated from the Chiba University Medical School. After joining NHK, he was engaged in the planning and production of programs on health, medicine, and welfare issues. His achievements have earned him awards such as the Hoken Bunkasho (Health Culture Award) and the Japanese Red Cross Society Emperor Award. In addition to being a member of the Medical Research Council of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, he also serves as consultant to the Japan Hospital Association, advisor to the International Medical Center of Japan, and so forth. His publications include *An Aging Society That is Comfortable and Satisfying* (published by Tokyo Kyoiku Joho Center).

Keiko Higuchi

Chairperson, Women's Association for the Better Aging Society

Keiko Higuchi was born in 1932. She graduated from the Faculty of Letters at Tokyo University and also completed studies in The Tokyo University Institute of Newspaper Research. She worked for Jiji Press and other media companies, and then she began to work as a freelance critic. She was a professor at Tokyo Kasei University from 1986 to 2003 and the first director of the Center for the Advancement of Working Women from 2000 to 2003. Currently, she serves as representative of the Japan NGO Council on Aging and Professor Emeritus of Tokyo Kasei University. Her main publications include *Grandma Power* (Shinsuisha), *Challenge* (Graphsha, inc), and *My Readiness for Aging* (Bunka Shuppankyoku).

Yukihiro Kadono

Professor, Kwansai Gakuin University

Professor Kadono was born in 1955 and graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at Kyoto University. He completed the doctoral course at the Graduate Engineering Research, Osaka University. He holds a doctorate in engineering and is a First Class Registered Architect. In 1987, he went to work for the Marketing Office of the Osaka branch of Dentsu. In 1995, he became a professor in the Faculty of Human Environmental Sciences at Mukogawa Women's University and assumed his present position in 2006. He has written books such as *The Twentieth Century in the Suburbs: Residential Areas Seeking a Focus* (Gakugei Shuppansha), and is co-editor of *Suburban Residential Areas in Modern Japan* (Kashima Shuppan).

Hiroshi Kanekawa

Executive Director, Japanese Association of Certified Social Workers

Hiroshi Kanekawa graduated from the Faculty of Literature at Gakushuin University and completed a major at the Japanese National Institute of Health. He is a certified social worker and psychiatric social worker, and he has spent nearly 30 years in the field of health and welfare, serving in capacities such as general manager of a private hospital and head of a special nursing home for the elderly. He has been deeply involved in the adult guardianship system since its inception and is a director of the Japanese Adult Guardianship Law Association. He is the co-author of *Law Encyclopedia on Adult Guardianship and Long-term Care and Inheritance* (Sansendo).

Hitoshi Kato

Non-fiction author

Hitoshi Kato was born in 1947. He graduated from the School of Political Science & Economics at Waseda University. After working as a magazine editor, he became a non-fiction author and has written about how retirees live and elderly welfare. His main publications include *People Who Challenge the 'Quality' of Long-term Care: 28 People Who Opened a New Door* (Chuo Hoki Shuppan), *After Retirement: Wisdom for Living Well* (Iwanami Shoten), and *Just One Person's Second Chance: Action Files of 55 Early Retirees* (Yomiuri Shimbun).

Mitsuo Makino

Mayor of Iida City in Nagano Prefecture
Member, Self-Supporting Zone Study Panel

Mitsuo Makino was born in 1961 in Nagano Prefecture. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University. After graduating, he joined the Japan Development Bank (currently the Development Bank of Japan). He served in various high-ranking positions, such as Auditor of the Toyama Office, General Manager of the Frankfurt Office, and General Manager of the Oita Office. He resigned in March 2004 and was elected mayor of his hometown, Iida City, in October 2004.

Ken Miura

Associate professor, Graduate School, Osaka City University

Born in 1970, Professor Miura graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at Kyoto University. In 1997, he was a Special Research Fellow at Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. In 1998, he was awarded a doctorate in Engineering from Kyoto University and became a research assistant at the Research Institute of the Graduate Faculty of Engineering at Kyoto University. He has held his present position since 2004. The Architectural Institute of Japan awarded him its Incentive Award. He is the editor of *Long-Term Care Will Change with Individual Rooms and Individualized Care* (Chuo Hoki Shuppan), and co-author of works including *The Group Home Reader: The Key to Caring for Elderly People with Dementia* (Minerva Shobo).

Michiko Mukuno

Professor, Oita University

Michiko Mukuno was born in 1956 and is from Oita Prefecture. She graduated from the Faculty of Law at The University of Tokyo and joined the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1978. She was Director of the Urawa City (currently Saitama City) Department of Welfare from 1990-92 and became the first woman in charge of the Annual Report on Health and Welfare in 1998. She came to her present position in 2006, before which she held positions as Professor at the Japan College of Social Work, Cabinet Office Counselor, and General Affairs Manager of the Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau. Her co-written publications include *The First Social Security and Keywords in Women's Studies*.

Sachiko Murata

Welfare journalist

After graduating with a degree in English and American Literature at Rikkyo University, Sachiko Murata worked as an announcer at NHK. She was a newscaster and reporter on news programs such as “Studio 102” and “NHK News Wide,” and later became an NHK senior commentator. She also worked as a newscaster on programs such as “NHK Special: When You Become Bedridden,” “NHK Morning Wide Series on Aging Society,” and “Radio Evening Paper.”

Yuko Nishikawa

Professor, Kyoto Bunkyo University

Yuko Nishikawa was born in 1937, graduated from the Faculty of Literature of Kyoto University, completed the doctoral course in the Graduate Faculty of Literature Research, and received her doctorate from the University of Paris. After teaching at Tezukayama Gakuin University and Chubu University, she assumed her present position in 1996. She has written such works as *Geopolitics of the Postwar Period* (University of Tokyo Press), *Stories about Housing and Families: Men's Homes and Women's Homes, Rooms without Gender Difference* (Shueisha), and *The Modern Nation and Housing Models* (Yoshikawa Kobunkan).

Tokumi Odagiri

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Tokumi Odagiri was born in 1959 in Kanagawa Prefecture. He completed a doctorate in the Graduate School of Agricultural Science at The University of Tokyo. He came to his present position in 2006, before which he held positions such as Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Economics at Takasaki City University of Economics and Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Tokyo. He has co-written publications such as *Symbiotic Farming Systems in Intermediate and Mountainous Areas: The Frontier of Destruction and Recovery and Reader on Practical Community Development: Independence and Cooperation*.

Hidehisa Otsuji

Former Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare
House of Councilors Member

Hidehisa Otsuji was born in 1940. He attended but dropped out of the National Defense Academy. After serving as the vice chairman of the Nippon Izokukai (Japan War-Bereaved Association) and councilor for Kagoshima Prefectural Assembly, he was elected by the Liberal Democratic Party to a proportional representation seat in the House of Councilors in 1989 and is currently in his fourth term. He served as Vice Minister of Financial Affairs and Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. Currently, he is the chair of the House of Councilors Budget Committee. He has worked actively on support for emigrants to the Dominican Republic and devoted his efforts to passing a bill relating to a special one-time compensation payment to these emigrants. In addition, he focuses on expanding social security.

Takeshi Sasaki

Professor, Gakushuin University
Chairperson, Self-Supporting Zone Study Panel

Takeshi Sasaki was born in 1942 in Akita Prefecture. He graduated from the Political Science Department of the Faculty of Law at The University of Tokyo and then earned a law doctorate. He came to his present position in 2005, before which he held positions as Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Law, and President at The University of Tokyo. He has served in a variety of high-ranking posts, such as co-representative of the People's Council for Building a New Japan and president of the Japan Association of National Universities. His publications include *What Can Politics Do?*, *Plato's Spell*, and *The Enigma of Democracy*.

Mariko Sonoda

Associate professor, Meiji University

Born in 1957, she graduated from the Engineering Faculty of Chiba University and completed a doctoral program at Chiba University's Natural Sciences Research Institute. She is also certified as a First Class Registered Architect. From 1981 to 1985, she was employed by Ichiura Urban Architectural Consultants. From 1986 to 1996, she was a senior researcher in the Building Technology Research Institute of the Building Center of Japan, after which she assumed her current position in 1997. Her publications include *Housing for the Elderly Around the World: Japan, the U.S., and Europe* (Building Center of Japan).

Sachiko Takagi

Senior Staff, General Affairs Welfare Division,
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Sachiko Takagi graduated from the School of Social Welfare at Shukutoku University and obtained a certified social worker. After graduation, she became employed by the City of Machida and was assigned to the Hikari Ryoikuen Welfare Center for the Disabled. In 2001, she was assigned to the Senior Citizen Welfare Division and became involved in starting the Machida Adult Guardianship System Program. In 2005, she was transferred to the General Affairs Welfare Division as the restructure of the city's organization. She is actively involved in the adult guardianship system in the front line.

Yoshinori Yamaoka

Professor, Hosei University
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Yoshinori Yamaoka was born in 1941 in Old Manchuria. He completed a doctorate in architecture at The University of Tokyo. After working at Urban Planning and Design Institute Co., the Toyota Foundation, and on a freelance basis, he established the Japan NPO Center in 1996 and assumed the position of Managing Director and Secretary General. He has served in his current position since 2008. His publications include *Changing Times*, *NPO Practical Course* (New Edition) (editor), and *NPO Basic Course* (New Edition) (editor).

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