



INTERNATIONAL
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CENTER-JAPAN

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and
Society

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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.

Twelve 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, Singapore and Czech Republic. 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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... to Create the Global Network for the World's Next Challenge

GLOBAL TREND

ILC Japan Attends "Alzheimer's in an Aging Society" at New York •50

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 2009. The roundtable discussion was attended by leading persons of each field and this issue is the extracts of those discussions from vol. 10 to vol. 13 which were translated into English and compiled by ILC-Japan.



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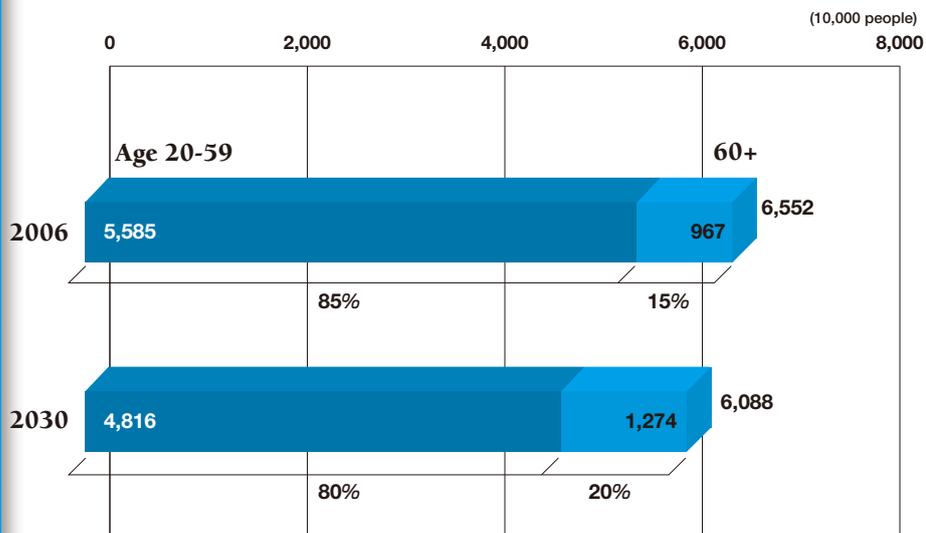
Managing Director and Vice President,
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Roundtable Discussion

1

New Ways of Working in an Aged Society

- Outlook of Working Population
If participation in the labor market is increased:



Source: "Case Where Participation in the Labor Market Is Increased," Projection by Employment Security Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2007



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The number of participants in the labor market is one barometer for measuring the vitality of society. In 2006, the total number was 65.52 million people, of whom 55.85 million (85%) were from 20 to 59 years old and 9.67 million (15%) were 60 or older. By 2030, the total number is predicted to decrease 5 million to 60.88 million people. In particular, participants aged 20 to 59 are expected to decline 7.7 million to 48.16 million. If a system to secure employment for senior citizens were developed and senior citizens who have the desire and ability to work were able to participate in the labor market, then those aged 60 or over in the labor market would increase to 12.72 million (20%). From this it is clear that senior citizens themselves will support and bring vitality to a super-aged society.

Does Society Undervalue the Power of Senior Citizens?

Ogawa: Population aging has occurred in several stages. When simply long life was thought to bring happiness, the only goal was to lengthen the average life expectancy as much as possible. However, once the average life expectancy increased, the goal became a healthy life expectancy without illness or

need for nursing care. With this, the global emphasis has shifted to prevention.

Once we achieve longevity in good health, it is time to start thinking more about the meaning of life. This means one's purpose in life (*ikigai* in Japanese term), or function/role, and from this, goals such as "active aging" and "productive aging" have begun to be discussed.

Since my research targets primarily agricultural villages, I have had

•1 A leaf business

Irodori, Inc., where Tomoji Yokoishi serves as vice president, commercializes leaves and flowers that are used for garnish in the Japanese cuisine. The company creates added value by sorting and packaging the leaves and flowers by color, size and quality. About 190 elderly people work for the business and their average age is about 70 years old.



many opportunities to meet senior citizens who work so hard that I have wanted to ascribe the phrase “comatose youth” to young urbanites, but I realized that there actually is a tendency in cities to see senior citizens only as recipients of services. In the perspective of large cities, the problem of aged society is tantamount to the problem of the elderly who need nursing care. This simplistic association strikes me as very odd.

Healthy senior citizens in agricultural villages are carving many opportunities for themselves. For example, my report entitled “Community Development by Older Persons,” which introduces the activities of senior citizens in morning markets and outdoor markets, was published by the Agricultural Policy Research Committee in 1982, but it was criticized as an anachronism and as something that would disturb the modern distribution system. However, we need to realize that the income generated by senior citizens throughout Japan in activities such as morning markets, outdoor markets, and roadside stations has today reached an amount that is equal to the agricultural production of Yamagata Prefecture, one of the main agricultural prefectures in Japan.

Are we undervaluing the power of senior citizens? If so, I think the

problem lies with us in the way that we view things. Instead of undervaluing them, we need to develop a social system in which we can fully tap the strength of senior citizens. Therefore, I have invited here a number of people who are tapping the strength of senior citizens from various standpoints.

First, I would like to hear from Mr. Yokoishi, who succeeded with a leaf business^{•1} in Kamikatsu-cho, Tokushima Prefecture.

Reducing Medical Expenses with a Leaf Business

IRODORI INC.

Yokoishi: Kamikatsu-cho is a very small town in Tokushima Prefecture with a population of approximately 2,000, and it has the highest proportion of the elderly in the prefecture. One in two people is aged 65 or over, and normally it would not be unusual for such a town to disappear. However, the leaf business gave senior citizens energy and revived the community.

I myself was an outsider from Tokushima City, so when I went to Kamikatsu-cho, I was shocked to see that senior citizens had routinely developed the unhealthy habit of drinking alcohol from the morning because they had nothing to do when they awoke. I thought this was awful. Like the proverb, “the devil



“ We need a social system that gives a role to the elderly and fully tap their strength. ”

finds work for idle hands,” people with nothing to do begin to meddle in the affairs of others. Overly meddling senior citizens are disliked, and this vicious cycle within families will spread throughout the community. I knew something had to be done about this.

This is why I, who have never thought from the perspective of community development, began to think it would be great if everyone had a chance and that we had to create something to occupy them from the time they awake. That’s where I came up with the idea of the leaf business.^{•2} For senior citizens, I thought it would be good to use familiar local resources, but the initial reaction of the senior citizens was harsh.

They said, “Picking up things under your feet is collecting garbage. There’s nothing as demeaning as living life collecting garbage.” Senior citizens are very proud in a sense. Therefore, in order to make this business succeed, I thought it would be important for each person to have

pride in his/her work.

I started various systems unique to the town, such as ordering via wireless fax, using computers that were not yet common in Japan at the time, and introducing POS systems, bringing it to the point where people in their 70s and 80s would take orders on their own, using computers. Looking back now and thinking about why it went well, I do not think that it was because of the concept of community revitalization or development, but rather because all senior citizens were treated as individuals. I treated each person as a business owner and made a barcode identifying each. So treating them as individuals has led to success, in my view.

As a result, I think the biggest change actually took place in the minds of senior citizens. Unlike mechanically completing work given with predetermined results, they came to put together things on their own and think, and this practice stimulates their brain structure each day.

•2

In 1981, Mr. Yokoishi was looking for new and stable business ideas for Kamikatsu-cho when he stopped at a sushi restaurant on the way back from a produce market in Osaka. A lady was sitting near him and she was so delighted with a red maple leaf that came on her dish that she wrapped it in her handkerchief to take home. Seeing this gave him the idea of making business out of natural garnish.

Contrary to the “comatose youth” that Mr. Ogawa mentioned, their imagination, energy, and sensitivity to things is wonderful. The transformation was so great that I was amazed that people who were old could change this much.

What’s more, this led to a reduction in healthcare expenditures. Currently, Kamikatsu-cho has the lowest healthcare expenditures among all 24 cities and towns in Tokushima Prefecture, ¥300,000 lower per person than the highest town and ¥200,000 lower than even the national average.

By reducing the healthcare expenditure of 10 million people by ¥200,000, overall costs would decrease ¥2 trillion. This means that if the government takes the lead and gives senior citizens a chance, even with an initial investment of 10 billion, ¥2 trillion could be saved in healthcare costs.

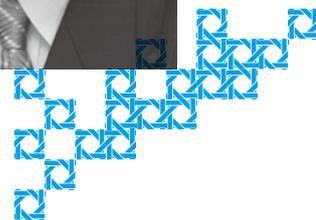
Here is a funny anecdote: A senior citizen from Kamikatsu-cho was hospitalized due to a stroke and received therapy at the hospital to re-

store function to a paralyzed hand. Therapy would require the payment of medical fees. However, returning home and using the hand in the same way to sort leaves would bring in income. Therefore, he asked to be sent back to his home as soon as possible. The senior citizens of Kamikatsu-cho are too busy to get sick.

Ogawa: I am very impressed by the idea of treating senior citizens as business owners instead of wage laborers. And the fact that this led to a reduction in healthcare costs is amazing. In cities, people pay money to go to fitness clubs in order to maintain their health, but by working as business owners, people can earn an income and become healthy. By making this dream a reality, the initiative in Kamikatsu-cho is the best practice of active aging.

Next, I would like to hear from Mr. Horiike, who found new potential for senior citizens to participate in society through NPOs in urban areas.

“ *Treating senior citizens as individuals has led to our success.* ”



Major Transformation by Acquiring E-mailing Skills

NPO SENIOR SOHO SALON MITAKA

Horiike: I was employed by an electrical appliance manufacturer for many years, and as a typical businessman, I knew almost nothing about local matters and had little interest either.

When I was 58 and making a website for a local university alumni association in the Mitaka area where I live, almost no one could use email or the Internet, so I was asked to teach them. I was busy and it was a bother, so first I took a poll to see what people wanted to do if they could use the Internet.

If all the responses were boring, I thought I could use this as a reason to refuse, but there were many people with interesting thoughts, so I was surprised and became motivated. It was such a pity that people with such interesting thoughts could not use the Internet, so I decided to try and help.

The direction of the class matched the model business of the SOHO City Concept^{•3} that the City of Mitaka was launching at that time.

Mitaka City is a typical residential city whose business tax revenues are less than tobacco tax revenues. The city government was very worried about a decline in tax

revenues due to the increasing retirement of senior citizens. To combat this, the city government launched the SOHO City Concept targeted at senior citizens with pensions, expertise, and personal connections, but in reality the city government was unable to keep track of these senior citizens. It is possible to keep track of them in terms of fixed assets and health insurance, but it is completely impossible to keep track of them in terms of where and what kind of work they did and what they want to do after retirement, so the city was ready to give up when they encountered our activities.

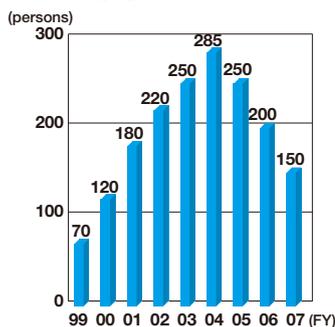
From my experience, I thought that email was the most needed IT for senior citizens. If they could use email, they would want to communicate with people, so they would try to use it right away and make quick progress. Also, if they could search the Internet, they would be able to find out a person's hobbies, likes and dislikes, desired work, and so forth.

Senior citizens were very pleased with the Internet access education that I provided for them. The City of Mitaka's programming director told me that an Internet business for senior citizens could be done as a commissioned program by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and recommended that I apply. I was fortunate to get

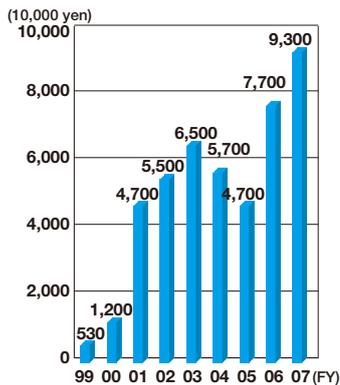
•3 SOHO City Concept

Mitaka City, a typical residential city, has planned since early days to secure the tax revenue by transforming the residents' personal fixed assets to business assets under the banner of "SOHO City Concept."

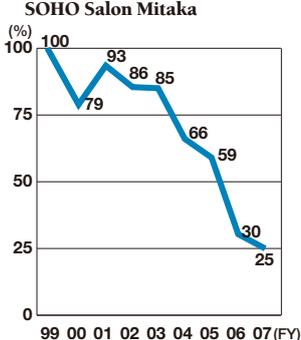
•4 Changes in the number of senior SOHO Salon Mitaka members



Changes in the sales by senior SOHO Salon Mitaka



Changes in the ratio of IT businesses in senior SOHO Salon Mitaka



•5

Concerning the “transformation from company people,” one of the success factors, Mr. Horiike gives the following tips: (1) Create business out of a working group (A group will naturally develop out of a mailing list), (2) Operate PC advisor certification training (create own curriculums and only allow those who have completed the course to participate), and (3) Use comment, PR and IT in a way the person is visible (Offer many interactions beyond e-mailing, about 200 meetings per month).

¥5 million to start Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka.

When I started this, I said, “Let’s be extraordinary old men.” Ordinary old men tell young people about one’s past, but “extraordinary old men” continue challenging boldly what they do not know or understand. Many people felt the same way, and in September 1999 we started with around 70 people.

Initially, I intended to dissolve the business when the ¥5 million from MITI had been used up, but everyone wanted to continue, so we became an NPO one year later and have continued for approximately 10 years since then.

When we decided to continue, we also decided to clearly state in advance the services that we could provide. We would not provide services for free; everything would be for compensation. That would be the most motivating factor, so it was decided unanimously.

In the following year, an IT education program was planned for 7 million senior citizens throughout Japan, and we got a contract for 3,500 out of 5,300 people from Mitaka City and earned ¥15 million for textbook development and teaching. That was a time when the concept of collaborative work still had not spread in society.

In the six years that I served as representative director, annual sales reached ¥60 million. Even since my

successor took over, sales have grown to ¥95 million in the last two years. The majority of sales come from payroll revenues, and initially there was a lot of IT work, but now 70 percent is not IT work.^{•4} Many NPOs and administrators throughout Japan come to visit us, and we charge for this as well.

In my view, the role of Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka is that of a platform. People from companies do not understand local matters, and there is a gap between them and the community. In order to overcome this gap, Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka acts as a platform.

Ogawa: Senior citizens in cities work on a SOHO basis for pay, and this seems to have fed into an NPO. In order to locally use the knowledge accumulated by senior citizens who worked at companies, it is important to have people and organizations that could link this with local needs. As in the phrase, “Community debuts are difficult,” many retired people who worked hard in companies cannot find opportunities to work in the community, and I think the efforts of Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka really are pioneering in this respect. I wonder what were the keys to your success?

Horiike: First is that our transformation from company people went well.^{•5}

Second is that we were able to share a lot of local information by making a mailing list. At a time when not even the city government had a mailing list, I created a mailing list of more than 100 people for the first time in Mitaka City, which made it possible to exchange information and make decisions quickly.

Third, as I mentioned earlier, is that we made a policy of providing services for pay.

Fourth is that we were able to establish a good network of supporters, players, and producers. For example, players would go to make repairs when the Internet went down, while producers would think about PR and other business aspects of the work, and supporters would come and help from time to time. These three groups of people spontaneously emerged, and they worked together while deciding each of their roles through experience; thus, a network was established in the community.

Fifth is the collaboration with the government, and sixth is that we

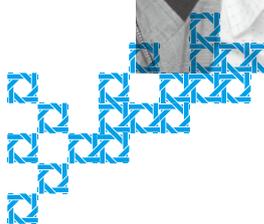
were able to create a trusted peer group locally.

Ogawa: The producers that you mention in the fourth item are people who fulfill a role that combines planning and management ability, and this is very important. Many failures of agricultural villages involve consultants suddenly coming in from cities and talking about making money without knowing about the local area. Of course, it would be best for people who seriously can think in line with the local area to fulfill this role. As a producer, what do you think, Mr. Yokoishi?

Yokoishi: As a producer, it is important to be able to reject common sense and recognize what people do not notice. For example, it is important to view senior citizens not only as recipients but also as providers of nursing care services. Next is the ability to communicate to others. Without the ability to communicate, it is difficult to clearly explain



“ Activities without compensation tend not to create a sense of worth. ”



one's thoughts and be understood. Understandable speech and expression also become important. If possible, it is better to be able to casually use bright and fresh words. Lastly, there must be understanding people around.

Ogawa: Whenever someone tries something new, opposition abounds. And the strongest opposition usually comes from one's spouse (*laugh*). However, when supporters compliment one's efforts here and there, it eventually is heard by the strongest opposition, which makes things easier.

Next I'd like to hear from Mr. Ishida, whose senior citizen volunteer activities led to a reduction in long-term care insurance premiums.

Local Volunteers Reduce Long-Term Care Insurance Premiums

CARE VOLUNTEER SYSTEM OF INAGI CITY

Ishida: I am not a welfare specialist per se, but I have been involved in this field for a little more than 10 years. A senior staff person once told me that welfare is a matter of human resources and experience, and although I learned many things, I always felt somehow unfamiliar with the community.

Long-term care insurance is just an insurance system, so everyone

pays premiums, and the necessary and sufficient money is set aside and used only for a small portion of those who suffer an insured event. People began to think, however, that they would lose money unless they used the system. They complain when their elderly family is certified to the level of care needs not as serious as they want, so the system has deviated from its original intention, and its aim has become unclear.

In particular, around three years ago, there was a tremendous increase in the number of users of the long-term care insurance system, and from the perspective of the system's sustainability, there was grave concern that the system would collapse without a large percentage of healthy people.

The concept of care prevention has taken root, but the importance of staying healthy is not well heeded. In fact, senior citizens themselves don't really believe they will ever need long-term care.

Therefore, they do not want to pay premiums for insurance that they will not use. This is why I thought that an incentive for healthy people to stay healthy should be built into the insurance.

When I thought hard about how to achieve this, I noticed that people involved in local activities were healthy. In other words, people actively involved in local activities are

not likely to need nursing care, so I thought that their insurance premiums could be made lower. This is the same concept as one used in automobile insurance premiums.

Therefore, I proposed the Inagi City Care Volunteer System^{•6}, a program in which community activities could reduce insurance premiums.

The number of people who participate in society would increase because of the incentive of reduced long-term care insurance premiums. This participation in society would benefit not only others but also oneself. My aim was for people to participate in society by doing what they enjoy.

However, the national government said insurance premiums that form the backbone of social security could not be lowered at the convenience of a local government, so I proposed a “special zone”. Residents pay a cost to continue living in the community anyway, so I thought it was only natural for this to be decided by consent of the local residents.

Of course, there were criticisms from residents. They worried that if some people’s premiums decreased, others’ would increase, and they thought that volunteer activities should be without compensation. However, controversy means that there are points to discuss. Inagi City continued posting the points of discussion and opinions for and

against on its website.

Participating in local activities actually benefits oneself and of course the community, and I believe that this then turns into energy for one to continue to live there. With this belief, we continued to provide information and deepen the debate, and as a result, I think the distance between government and residents shrunk.

At first, I was told that this idea would not spread, but now it is receiving a great deal of attention from all over Japan, and even the mass media is covering it as a trailblazing idea.

Ogawa: The program in Inagi City can be said to have opened new work opportunities for senior citizens in volunteer activities that reduce their social security burden. How are insurance premiums reduced?

Ishida: Doing volunteer activities locally earns stamps in the Keeping Healthy Notebook (care volunteer notebook). These stamps are collected and turned into points, which can be redeemed if one so wishes at a certain time. This amount is deducted from long-term care insurance premiums.

There are several keys to the success of this program.

First, volunteers who normally remained behind the scenes were

•6 **Inagi City Care Volunteer System**

This system evaluates the nursing care volunteer work provided by the elderly, gives points based on the evaluation, and issue, upon request, a grant to the volunteer in exchange for the points he/she has earned. It started in September 2007.

made the main players in this system. Volunteer activities, which could be tracked only by the volunteers themselves in the past, now would be recorded in a notebook. Many expressed that they were very happy about this.

Next, volunteer activities could be applied to one's insurance premiums. The maximum annual amount that can be redeemed is ¥5,000, which is only ¥400 per month. ¥400 disappears with one roundtrip bus fare. In order to get ¥5,000, one must volunteer four or five times per month. Therefore, this is not remuneration for work, but nevertheless there were a tremendous number of people who wanted to participate.

Another major key to the success is that we were able to use volunteer activities already underway. Rather than creating a new care volunteer system, we gave due appreciation to existing volunteers and slightly changed their value and meaning in order to achieve this much success.

At first, we were only able to keep track of around 35 volunteers aged 65 or over, but when the system was launched, 180 people came forward, and now there are 280 one year later. Gaining the ability to see local potential was huge. There actually is hidden strength in local areas. In order to access this, it is necessary to have a unit whose function is to change one's perspective, coordinate, and organize arguments for and against. We administrators will act as coordinators. I believe that this will lead to balance between the fact that residents are the main players and the indirect curbing of social nursing care costs.

As a result, I came to understand that ultimately the most important thing in Inagi is not managing the long-term care insurance system well, but for residents to continue living in the community even until the end. The most important thing is to build an environment where healthy people can continue living healthily in Inagi and people who



need care can continue living there accordingly as well. With this, I was able to reconfirm the starting point of community welfare.

Ogawa: I visited Colorado Springs in the U.S. in the past, and there the city published a calendar which made it possible to check how much volunteer activities reduced the tax burden. I remember having the impression that this was very important in terms of valuing volunteers.

However, in Japan, records concerning volunteers are not kept carefully in the first place. There is no evaluation of individuals and no overall evaluation of the effects locally either. Volunteerism is stressed, but measures are not taken to promote this, so Inagi City's program is a new start. By the way, what is the age composition of the 280 registered people?

Ishida: The oldest is 93 years old, and there are four people in their 90s. There are also four people who

require support, and they would incur service costs if they went to a day care center, but instead they are providers of services. This is a very big difference.

I think care volunteers transcend time and space. Now this system is limited to Inagi, but I think this shows great potential for development of a new system where these points can be redeemed elsewhere as well in the future.

*The Possibility of Working Styles
Other than Wage Labor*

Ogawa: I have the impression that the notion of how to work in Japan has changed dramatically since Japan's high growth period of the 1960s. There was a shift from self-employment to company employment as the prevailing way of working.

As a result, many people interpret work as equal to wage labor, but people remaining in agricultural villages have a little more flexible

“ *The starting point of community welfare is to build an environment where residents can continue living until the end.* ”

and diverse way of working. I came to understand that new ways of working for senior citizens are being sought in cities as well.

Today you presented an overview of the change in perspective on how senior citizens work, but I would like to hear about the future outlook.

Yokoishi: In rural areas, there are many opportunities for senior citizens. They have abundant life experience and wisdom as well as knowledge, so this can be used in more places in the countryside than in the city.

Particularly in the countryside today, village governments and agricultural cooperatives no longer function very well as community organizers, and local community is beginning to collapse.

This was exactly the situation when I came to Kamikatsu-cho, so not only senior citizens but all residents had become dependant, and only subsidies and public works could be relied upon. Young people were desperately trying to make a daily living and had no latitude to think about the village and community on a larger perspective. That is why senior citizens with wisdom and extra time could open the way.

There is a tendency to see senior citizens as a burden, as socially vulnerable people who need nursing care, but in reality a majority of

senior citizens are healthy. In quantitative terms, over 80 percent of senior citizens are healthy, so we have to use the power of these people. Elderly women working for Irodori Inc. in Kamikatsu say they are too busy to go to a day care center. They have many things to do when they wake up in the morning, so they feel like doing their best.

However, of course people have also criticized this initiative in Kamikatsu, typically saying that it is cruel to make the elderly work. On the contrary, I think that a daily life in which one finds no meaning in his or her role and existence is not part of a fulfilling life. Aren't treating the elderly with respect and not allowing them to do anything or have any role completely different?

If you could see the bright, smiling faces of elderly women in Kamikatsu, you would know the answer. For both young and old, it is important to be able to make one's own life decisions, and our initiative still has a role to play in realizing that kind of society.

What we are doing now from this viewpoint is to look medically at the health of senior citizens and try to analyze this quantitatively. As I mentioned at first, since beginning this work, my feelings and experience tell me that the brain function of senior citizens has become more active and that judgment ability and decision-making ability has increased, and as

data on medical expenses indicates, they have become healthy.

We teamed up with Tokushima University to start a study/research project that would attempt to prove this quantitatively. There has been much research on prevention, i.e. how to prevent people from becoming in need of nursing care, but there has not been much research in pursuit of healthier and more dynamic lives for healthy people. If it could be medically proven that using computers to obtain new information every day, and performing tasks by making judgments and decisions independently based on this information will definitely lead to health, and if this could be shown quantitatively, I am confident that this would make a major change in how people and society see and value senior citizens. This is why we are first collecting data now.

Ogawa: The International Association of Gerontology World Congress in 2013 is scheduled to be held in Seoul with “digital aging” as its theme. The Congress in Paris held in July 2009 will also hold sessions on active aging, and I would like to introduce the way in which senior citizens work using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Kamikatsu-cho.

I think it is important for the world to focus on how to quantitatively substantiate the source of

senior citizens’ energy through the leaf business and morning markets.

The Concept of Paid Volunteers

Horiike: When I heard Mr. Ishida say earlier that paid volunteer activities are being achieved under government leadership, it sparked my interest.

We have been helping with a Community School^{•7} project since eight years ago, and now there are volunteers called Study Advisors in all subjects at an elementary school. Volunteers serve around 3,000 person days at the elementary school each year, and this is spreading to other schools as well. Currently, Study Advisors play such an important role that classes cannot function without them, but they are still unpaid volunteers. In the process of discussing how to make them paid volunteers, there have always been two conflicting opinions.

One is that we are just helpers, not education professionals, so we should not be paid. The other is that we are professionals who display professionalism in the form of helping, so naturally we have to study and the cost of studying also should be paid.

I myself take the latter position, and that has not changed since I started teaching IT to senior citizens approximately 10 years ago. In other

•7 Community School

In Mitaka City, the operation of public elementary and junior high schools is separated from the board of education and is undertaken by the local community. This is part of the nationwide initiative based on an ordinance of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In Mitaka, the operation of all 15 public elementary schools will be transferred to local communities by 2010.

•8 **Mitaka School Angels**

They are School Safety Facilitators who ensure the safety of pupils at school in cooperation with teachers and staff, as well as along the way to/from school, working with volunteer civilian patrol. Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka undertakes this project commissioned by Mitaka City.

•9 **Inagi City Care Volunteer System Quiz Challenge**

The quiz is offered on the city website to promote understanding of the system in a fun way. There are 25 questions ranging from grade 1 through 3. See. <http://www.city.inagi.tokyo.jp/kurashi/fukushi/kaigohoken/kaigosien/kentei/index/html>

•10 **Cooperative program with Tokyo Verdy**

Tokyo Verdy, a professional soccer team based in Inagi City, has endorsed the Care Volunteer System and supports it by rewarding the volunteers with a gift such as a pedometer or a towel every time a volunteer earns 1,000 points.

words, our level of teaching might have been low, but that was no reason for designating us as volunteers. We have been teaching at this level, but we are professionals who do so, and that is different from professional IT educators. I think this debate will continue in the future, but hearing Mr. Ishida speak has made me aware of new possibilities.

Likewise in terms of schools, the Mitaka City Government pays ¥25 million to an NPO for the activities of the Mitaka School Angels^{•8}, which is in charge of security. A city in Chiba Prefecture pays a security firm 120 million for the same service. Both Mitaka's NPO and the security firm in Chiba assign security personnel in the same way during the day, but the big difference is that we involve the entire community, including PTA, children's club, senior club, neighborhood association, and neighborhood commercial district, so someone is always watching the school even on evenings and days off. In other words, this naturally results in a community watch 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

While hearing about Inagi's program, I hopefully thought that the incentive of reasonable payment for residents to do volunteer work may spread to other communities in the future.

Ishida: Money definitely is impor-

tant, but unless there is coordination so that money has an effect in the end instead of being the purpose from the beginning, I feel it will make things more difficult instead. For example, Inagi's care volunteers would take an entirely different form if the goal were to reduce nursing care expenses. For controversial matters, someone must have the will to coordinate; otherwise, they will not go well.

In addition, if we try to resolve everything with government money, the cost will be enormous, so there is no need to systematize things that the community can normally do. Communities with many people who notice this become strong, with town planning councils, for example. Unfortunately, Inagi is a commuter town, so young people leave during the day, but we must strengthen the community under these circumstances. Because of this issue, I intended to provide support so that senior citizens of this community could feel useful. Our activities are only in the second year, but the system has taken root as we have promoted it through "Inagi City Care Volunteer System Quiz Challenge"^{•9} and a cooperative program with Tokyo Verdy^{•10}.

The effects on senior citizens are clear. Half of the care volunteers answered that their daily life has more of a rhythm, and they are healthier than the national average. As was

mentioned earlier, I think it will become increasingly important to quantify objective data.

Senior Citizens Need to Propose Issues

Ogawa: I have come to understand that this new way of working in an aged society actually is sprouting up in various forms.

Japan's demographic structure continues to change. While it was pyramid shaped in the 1930s, the base has narrowed with the decline in the birthrate, and meanwhile long life has become possible, so by 2050, it is expected to become mushroom shaped.^{•11}

As indicated earlier, in an era when one in five people is a senior citizen and over 80 percent of these are healthy, it is wrong for society to presume that all senior citizens are on the receiving end of services and to offer a post-retirement life of consumption only. We must build a society that can actively use the power of senior citizens throughout their lives.

The most important thing is for senior citizens themselves to propose new ways of working in response to the changes in Japanese society. This is not an issue for individuals to solve. Rather, I think it is top runner Japan's mission to make proposals from the perspective of

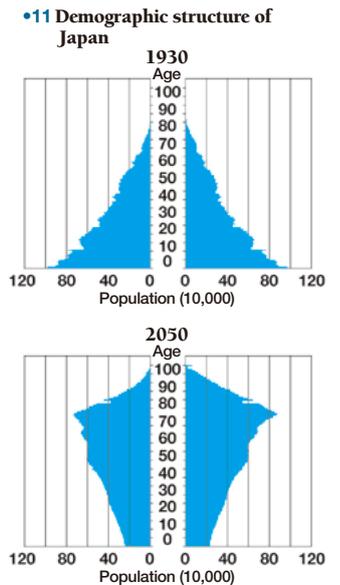
new ways for Japanese people as well as the world's people to work in an aged society.

In particular, women have an increasingly greater chance to live beyond the age of 100. However, given the work situation of women in Japan today, there are almost no opportunities to make socially valued contributions. Under such circumstances, it is questionable whether or not the framework of this society can really be maintained.

There are still many issues to be resolved regarding this new way of working in an aged society, and while using the programs described today as an entry point, I sensed again the need to make these more universal.

(10/24/2008)

Photography: Masahiro Minato



Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research



Participants:

Ayako Fujita

Professor, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University

Toshikazu Togari

President, Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (JEED)

Roundtable Discussion

2

Rethinking Productive Aging

• Changes in the Image of Elderly People (1970s and onward)

	1970s	→ 1995	→ 2005	→ 2013
Proportion of the elderly	7%-	14%-	20%-	25%-
Presence of elderly persons	Seems to have increased	Impact beginning to be seen	No longer unusual	Actively incorporated
Term given to society	Aging society	Aged society	Super-aged society	Mature society
Pattern of society	Circular with the working generation at the center	Circle begins to become distorted	Toward an oval shaped society with two focus points	Completion of an oval shaped society
How society views the elderly	Ageism	Beyond ageism	Toward productive aging	Establishment of productive aging
Policies for the elderly (65+)	Unconditional protection	Doubts about protection	Classification of those needing protection	Symbiotic society

Source: Ayako Fujita, "A Super-Aged Society Is Supported by the Elderly," p. 31 (Osaka University Press, 2007)



Kazuo Otsu

Reporter, Yomiuri Shimbun,
Tokyo Headquarters,
Social Security Division



Shigeo Morioka

President, ILC-Japan

In 1976, ILC-USA president Robert N. Butler was the first to put forth the concept of “productive aging.”

Instead of subjecting the elderly to discrimination and bias as weaklings, productive aging acknowledges that all people become old and continue to be increasingly important for society.

Over the past 30+ years, the environment surrounding the elderly has changed significantly.

Japan leads the world in becoming a super-aged society, and here we will think about the new society which Japan aspires to be, from the viewpoint of productive aging.

Involvement in Productive Aging

Fujita: My expertise is in geriatric behavioral science, and I encountered Dr. Butler’s^{•1} term “ageism”^{•2} around 1970. Looking around me, there was a great deal of discrimination against the elderly, so in an effort to eliminate this, I adopted ageism as my research focus. Dr. Palmore^{•3} also appeared around that time, so there was lively discussion about ageism, which was becoming a social issue even in the

United States.

Following this, Dr. Butler put forth the concept of productive aging. I came across this when I myself was thinking that simply eliminating ageism alone would not resolve the problems unless the elderly gained a clear sense of direction in living, so I clearly remember feeling relieved.

In Japanese society, the custom of respecting the elderly is still relatively strong, so for better or worse, biases toward the elderly go unchallenged without being seen or recog-

•1 Robert N. Butler, M.D.

Born in the US in 1927.
Doctor of Medicine. ILC-USA’s President and CEO, Professor of Department of Geriatrics, Mount Sinai School of Medicine in NY.
Committed to establish the National Institute on Aging of the National Institute of Health, Dr. Butler assumed its founding director. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1976 for his book “Why Survive? Being Old in America.” in which he advocated ‘productive aging.’ “Longevity Revolution” was published in 2008.

•2 Ageism

Organized stereotyping and discrimination against the elderly on the grounds of their old age “Why Survive? Being Old in America Published by Medical Friend Co.)

•3 Erdman B. Palmore

Erdman B. Palmore directed gerontology and research projects at Duke University. In his book, “Ageism: Negative and Positive (Published by Akashi Shoten),” he defines ageism as “negative or positive bias or discrimination against a certain age group.”

•4 **Advisors on employment of the elderly**

Management/labor consultants, management consultants for SMEs, social insurance and labor consultants, and other professionals and practitioners who are familiar with the issues involved in employing the elderly are certified as Advisors on employment of the elderly and assigned to each Prefectural Associations for the Employment for the purpose of assisting companies in developing conditions for employing the elderly.

nized as ageism. The concept of ageism itself does not seem to be understood in Japan.

In the United States, in the process of abolishing the mandatory retirement system and so forth, there was discussion about what ageism is, and efforts have been made to eliminate it. However, in the Japanese labor field, there is still a strongly entrenched notion that it is pitiful to make the elderly work. Under these circumstances, I have recently come to think that instead of working to eliminate ageism, we should work to create a new form of productive aging which, in turn, will deter ageism.

Productive aging has three advantages. The first is that it can eliminate ageism. The second is that elderly individuals can feel satisfied with living in society. And the third is that if the elderly are active, then society is that much more active. I think productive aging is upheld by these three pillars.

Morioka: I first met Dr. Butler when he came to Japan in 1987 to attend a symposium on aging issues, and I heard about the concept of productive aging then.

Dr. Butler said that the elderly live in diverse ways, but he wanted them to somehow participate in society, whether by volunteering, working for a salary, or getting involved in local activities. He also

said that a social system must be created to make this possible. I was impressed by the fact that he was actively involved in doing this.

We began our activities in 1990 by establishing the ILC in the United States and then in Japan. The ILC was established for the purpose of conducting surveys and research, publicity, enlightenment activities and so forth based on the concept of productive aging. Currently, eleven countries have joined together to form an alliance. Productive aging is a concept that forms the backbone of the ILC.

Togari: As its name indicates, the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities was established for the purpose of creating a society where anyone, regardless of age or disability, can work to his or her satisfaction and heart's desire. In order to promote employment of the elderly, we conduct various programs, including consulting and assistance to employers. Productive aging is an essential concept for realizing the society to which we aspire.

In terms of consulting and assistance, we first placed advisors on employment of the elderly^{•4} in each prefecture to provide advice on improving a work environment so that elderly workers can work to their full potential. For small and medi-

um-sized companies, we create and propose specific improvement measures in line with a company's needs.

In addition, we provide training and workshop sessions for employers and managers at workplace, as well as guidance on how elderly employees work based on their characteristics, how to utilize them, how to develop their abilities, and how to support their relationships in the workplace and their health management.

For middle-aged and elderly workers, we provide post-retirement life planning workshops and conduct surveys and research on working conditions for the elderly with the cooperation of companies, industry groups, and scholars.

Currently, we are focusing on two objectives.

The first is to create an environment where everyone who wants to work can do so until the age of 65. According to the Revised Law Concerning Stabilization of Employment of Older Persons⁵

that came into force in April 2006, employers must raise the mandatory retirement age, introduce a continuing employment system, or eliminate mandatory retirement. As of last June, two years after the law came into force, already 96 percent of companies with 51 or more employees were addressing this in some way.

According to a survey conducted last June, companies where anyone who so desires can work until the age of 65 comprise only 39 percent of all companies, but our aim is to raise this to 50 percent by FY 2010.

It is true that many companies wonder why they need to extend employment for everyone who so desires when the mandatory retirement system provides a chance to have unproductive and uncooperative employees resign. However, we want companies to think hard about whether workers are really happy when they are uncertain to fit the company's standards as they approach the age of 60.

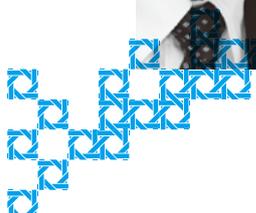
Many workplaces in Japan are

•5 Revised Law Concerning Stabilization of Employment of Older Persons

Article 9 of the Law Concerning Stabilization of Employment of Older Persons was revised such that the following were changed from obligations to make an effort to compulsory obligations: 1. raising the mandatory retirement age to 65, 2. adopting systems for continuing employment until age 65, or 3. abolishing mandatory retirement age.



“ *Rather than merely being able to work, it is important for a person to be evaluated and treated fairly and to work to his or her satisfaction.* ”



•6 According to a survey by the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, 55.3% of companies with three or more regular workers aged 65 or over also employ workers aged 70 or over.

where employees work together, so this teamwork suffers when workers feel uncertain, and the workplace atmosphere worsens when workers are always gauging their supervisors' feelings, and thus adversely impacting productivity, in my view.

In fact, many companies where everyone who wants to work is allowed to work until the age of 65 say that they are happy to have extended the mandatory retirement age and introduced a continuing employment system. When workers know that they can work even after the age of 60, loyalty to and love for the company develops, and workers want to cooperate with each other and work hard. This is certainly not negative to companies, so I hope that more companies will actively introduce this system.

The second objective is to put in

place conditions so that people can work from age 65 to 70.^{•6} By 2012, people born in 1947 will be the first group of baby boomers to reach the age of 65. The labor market statistics tell us that the percentage of working people is high, up to age 65, but it decreases precipitously after age 65. Despite their strong desire to work, in reality they cannot work. What will happen when the baby boomer generation reaches age 65 and leaves the labor market all at once? Currently, around 4.9 million out of 6.8 million baby boomers are employed, but if over half of these leave the labor market^{•7}, the impact will be bigger than we can imagine.

As of last June, 12.4 percent of companies ensure job security until the age of 70, but we aim to increase this to 20 percent by FY 2010.

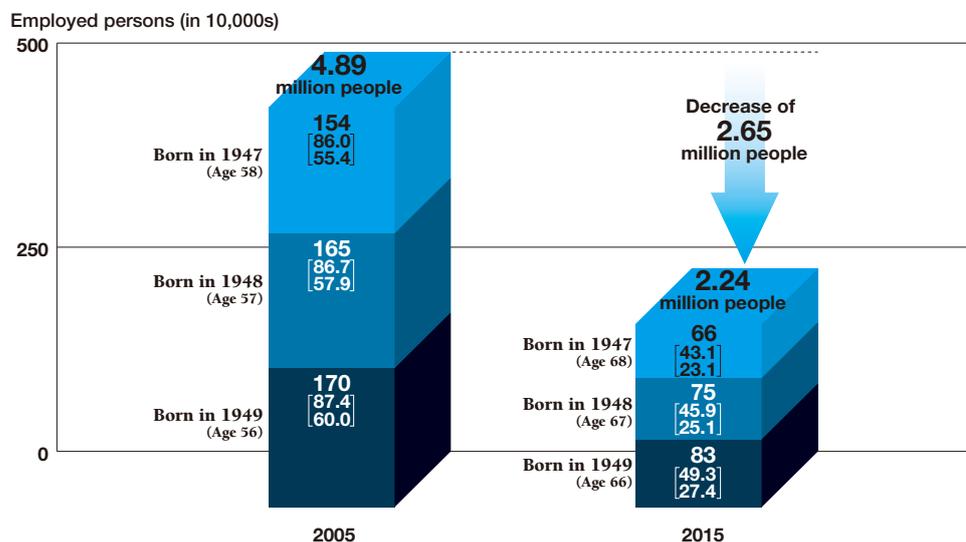
In order to achieve these two ob-

•7 Employment situation of baby boomers

If employment rates by gender and age for those aged 66 and over remain the same, by 2015 when everyone in the baby boomer generation will be at least 66, there will be 2.24 million baby boomer employees, which is 2.65 million, or 54%, less than in 2005.

Notes:

1. Data for 2005 is from the National Census by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
2. The number of employees in 2015 was calculated by multiplying gender- and age-based population numbers from the "Population Projections for Japan (medium-variant)" of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research by the male and female employment rates for those aged 66-68 in 2005 according to the National Census.
3. Numbers in brackets indicate employment rates for males on the left and females on the right.



jectives, we provide subsidies to companies that extend the mandatory retirement age to 65 and that provide continuing employment to the age of 70 for all employees who desire to work.

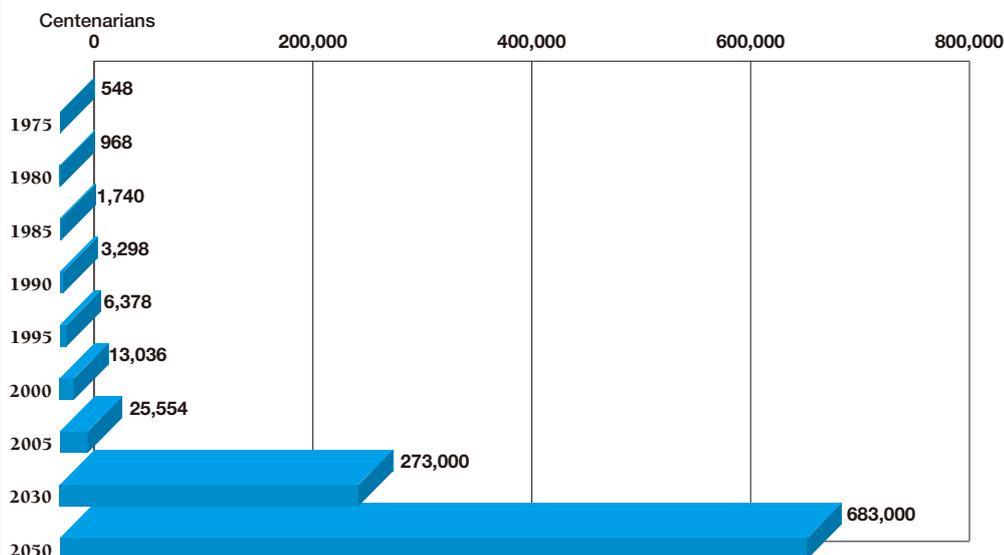
Otsu: At Yomiuri Shimbun, we started a column called “The Longevity Revolution” this year. When we started this, we were aware of the problem that although we have fulfilled the human desire for longevity, not all elderly persons are happy with their lives.

Looking at the data, there were already 36,000 centenarians in 2008, and this is expected to rise to nearly 700,000 by 2050⁸. The image of the elderly has changed considerably from a short time ago, hasn't it? In that case, individuals and society must also change in response to this. We hope that this

column will help to find the answer to the question of how we should change.

Actually, I personally wonder about the definition of “the elderly.” Generally, “the elderly” is said to mean age 65 and over, but this merely stems from a half-century-old report by the United Nations regarding the elderly which used this age category among others; there is no scientific basis behind it. It has not been proven that morbidity rises or ability decreases from the age of 65. Rather I realized that this is just a convenient convention for use in the world of demography. If this is the case, then we, including the media, must think about whether 65+ really means the elderly.

According to an independent public opinion survey by Yomiuri Shimbun, in response to the question, “From what age should people



8 Changes in the Number of Centenarians

Source: Press release materials from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

be called ‘the elderly?’”, only 15 percent answered, “From 65.” The most common answer was “From 70” at 41 percent, while 27 percent answered, “From 75.” It is clear from these results that the age classification of 65+, which was established a half century ago and has had a major impact on policy and our lives, no longer makes sense.

Taking a step further, the use of age as a standard is not consistent with the diverse aging patterns of humans in the 21st century. What does the elderly mean in this new era, and how should individuals and society age? These are questions that need to be considered in order to understand productive aging, in my view.

The Danger of Words and the Scope of Productive Aging

Fujita: Some scholars who study aging issues say that the study of productive aging is a “study of the elite.”

In other words, this is a message directed at the “elderly elite” who are healthy, positive-thinking, mentally sound, and self-composed. Some say that we must be careful of the concept of productive aging, because it could lead to discrimination against people who are not among the “elderly elite.” What do you think about this?

Otsu: Dr. Butler himself told me that he realized the danger of the word “productive aging.” I also felt when I was writing articles that productive aging tended to be received as a word limited to people with money, health, and motivation, which is different from the original intent, so the question is whether people who are bedridden, people with dementia, and other unhealthy people are excluded.

The word “productive” causes such misunderstandings. Some people in Japan have suggested changing this word to “purposeful (*ikigai*),” “successful,” or “active,” but none of these really click. In short, we need to create a society that affirms each person’s dignity regardless of any individual’s situation. Including a person who becomes ill or bedridden, I think the concept of viewing the person’s life positively must be built into society.

“The Longevity Revolution” column introduces a modern image of the elderly, who are not simply “super seniors” but have been scientifically proven to have higher athletic ability and are becoming different from the previous generation of the elderly. However, it is still criticized as referring only to people who are able. I strongly feel that I must be very careful in my reporting, fully aware that the true meaning of Dr. Butler’s productive aging could be misinterpreted by the world and

that this could produce the opposite effect.

Fujita: I also had trouble translating the word “productive” into Japanese. I wanted to avoid the use of its Japanese counterpart which implies economic abilities. I thought of using the Japanese counterpart for “creative” (creating a new way of life for the elderly), but instead of forcibly converting the term into Japanese, I believe it is better to use productive aging as is, as it is a good catch phrase.

In terms of addressing its risk of being interpreted in a discriminatory way, I think that productive aging is not a slogan that ALL senior citizens should aim toward, but rather only those who want to do so. For example, I think it is about creating an employment basis which allows those who want to work even in an old age to work. What do you think about this?

Morioka: I also understand it as building that kind of society, a society in which even the elderly and persons with disabilities can work if they have the desire and the motivation. Instead of talking about being over a certain age, we should make proposals based on building such a society.

Togari: Taking this a step further, I don't think it is only a matter of be-

ing able to work. We aim for a society in which everyone who so desires can work until age 65 and for more companies that will employ people until they are 70. However, I think we need to ensure that people can work to their full potential, receive fair wages and treatment for the value of their labor, and work to their satisfaction.

A person's abilities and accumulated knowledge must be valued, and if a person is still able to develop new abilities, then conditions must be in place for this to happen. Otherwise, people are just made to work, and this is not productive aging in the true sense.

In addition, I always wonder how far the scope of productive aging reaches. I personally think it is productive that even if a person reaches age 90 or 100, he/she can live and work somehow in society and this has still some value to others.

For example, a 100-year-old person could be well and active, or tell a young person about his or her experiences. It is important not to be always passive in life. If we say, “existence itself is valuable,” it may give a passive impression, so living a little more actively and doing some kind of work will have value to others or be valued by others, I think it is also productive aging.

Fujita: For example, elderly persons who are under the doctor and

also use long-term care insurance are producing employment in the fields of medicine and long-term care, so that may also be productive aging, but how far should this be extended?

My instinct is that productive aging refers to those who have the motivation to actively produce something. I wonder what Dr. Butler meant.

Morioka: Dr. Butler wanted to eliminate ageism at the time, so I think he put forth this concept so that people could participate in the labor market productively instead of being forced to retire based on age discrimination.

Since then, there have been changes in the environment and society surrounding the elderly, as well as changes in the attitudes of the elderly themselves, and as was just mentioned, it is very important that we are changing to a viewpoint in which the elderly produce value just by virtue of their existence. If we think in this way, the scope of

productive aging widens. For example, being healthy at age 100 is an encouragement to society. Dr. Butler also sees productive aging from this wider perspective.

Otsu: I also wondered for a long time about the scope of productive aging. As Mr. Morioka has just said, when I interviewed Dr. Butler directly, he said that productive aging includes not only work for pay but also living within a family.

Fujita: In my research on productive aging, I propose the concept of intent/motivation. Actually, even if a person does no productive activity, as long as he or she has the intent and will for productive aging, I think it can be called productive aging even if a person is bedridden. This thought is what led me to create a productive aging intent scale. By creating a scale, it is possible to teach people who are not positive thinking to become so, and I think it would be great if this could lead to activity for some people.



“ We must recognized a sense of apprehension included in the phrase “Productive Aging.” ”

Activity, as Mr. Togari said, carries with it the issue of whether or not an individual is able to work to his full potential and is satisfied with working. Previously, an elderly person engaged in volunteer work said, "I don't really want to come, but I do because I was recruited." This appears to be productive aging in terms of activity, but there is no intent/motivation.

Using Data to Undermine the Myth of Old Age

Otsu: One reason the elderly cannot use their abilities well in society is that there is a wall created by the myth of old age. That is, many people assume that because a person is 65 years old, his or her ability falters, thirst for knowledge and memory declines, efficiency deteriorates, and so forth. Using scientific data, I want to introduce the elderly of today. By showing objective and concrete data, if I can put an end to these misunderstandings and as-

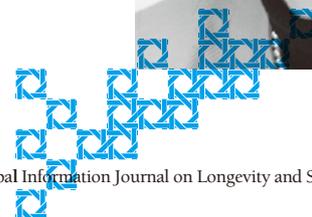
sumptions held by the public, I think something will change.

According to a survey by the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, companies that employ people until age 65 continue employing them until age 70. This is because they realized there is actually no problem in reality, and this suggests that even 70-year-olds can work in the same way.

I want this fact to be studied from a scientific angle, but the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has not gone this far yet. Campaigns and subsidies are important, but we also need to promote this kind of investigative research, and we in the media also need to communicate this kind of data to the public.

Fujita: I would like to provide a typical example from the standpoint of gerontological psychology. When an elderly person and a young person are given a memory test at a laboratory, the elderly person's performance is not very good.

“ *Productive aging begins not only with activity but also with intent.* ”



•9 **Prospective memory**

Memory regarding acts to be done in the future as opposed to retrospective memory, which is memory of the past.

However, in daily life, in prospective memory⁹ experiments (e.g. a person is handed a cell phone and asked to contact the laboratory by cell phone at 12:00 and 3:00), the elderly person performs better than the young person.

This is because the elderly person has his or her own ingenious devices for remembering, so physiological ability certainly does decline, but this is not directly linked to a decline in performance in daily life. This ingenuity might also be called “wisdom.”

Even in the case of pianists, they cannot play fast pieces when they get older, but by choosing pieces with emotion, they can perform music that has a different depth from when they were younger. Quantity decreases, but this can be compensated for by quality. There is now a trend starting to measure the ability of the elderly in terms of everyday problems instead of intelligence tests like up to now.

Togari: There are some cases in which elderly employees conduct inspections and younger employees assist it when a company that has employees over age 70 pairs together younger employees with older employees. Regardless of how much sensors are developed, inspection is largely dependent on experience and intuition amassed over many years. For example, in a

chemical complex, the state of affairs can be assessed by the sound a pipe makes when it is tapped. In this sense, it is a good idea for companies to pass down experience, intuition, and know-how by pairing together older and younger workers.

Conversely, elderly employees may be assigned to do minor preparatory work while younger employees are assigned to move heavy objects, or do other dangerous work. However, I think it is more effective to form teams that make good use of the experience and know-how accumulated by the elderly over many years.

I heard a surprising story from an industrial physician at an automobile manufacturer that falls, stumbles, and other workplace accidents occur more frequently among young workers than elderly workers. This is probably because elderly workers are more careful not to fall due to their many years of experience and intuition. However, having an accident can lead to major damage to elderly workers.

Therefore, in order to prevent accidents, companies install elevators, remove hazardous materials from walkways, and make floors flat so that they are barrier free. As a result, overall workplace accidents, including those involving young workers, will decrease, and productivity will increase. In the end, then, I always

say that treating the elderly well is a plus for the entire company.

The healthy life expectancy has increased, nutrition has improved, and people have become physically stronger, so I have promoted the employment of 60- to 65-year-olds without any thought to physical conditions, but no research has been done for those over age 65. In this sense, as Mr. Otsu said earlier, we may need to clarify this with objective data in order to persuade employers and managers in the future. Our organization has started to do this kind of research with the cooperation of occupational medicine and ergonomics experts.

Morioka: In the last roundtable talk, we discussed a leaf business called Irodori^{•10} in Tokushima Prefecture where people aged over 70 and 80 were working actively. Irodori is currently working with Tokushima University to quantitatively analyze from a medical perspective how much stronger the elderly working at Irodori have become since they started working. Instead of just talking vaguely about working hard by using mental power and stamina, if it could be medically proven that using one's head and body to work definitely leads to health, then I think the view of the elderly and attitudes of society would change completely.

The Mindset of the Elderly

Fujita: Through various attempts at productive aging, it is expected that we will be able to overcome ageism and create an accepting society. What should the elderly keep in mind here?

Togari: From now on, the proportion of the elderly will increase, and so the elderly will tend to monopolize various social resources. Even now, while 70 percent of social security budget goes toward the elderly, the budget for child-rearing is much lower than in other developed countries. Under such circumstances, each elderly individual must be a little more conscious of whether or not the Japanese society and economy will be able to survive in the future.

I think it is important for them to really feel determined to support society. Their notion of now wanting to be supported by young people because they had originally fueled Japan's rapid growth ends up making themselves into weaklings.

Unless those who can support society actually do start to support society regardless of age, 21st century Japan will lose its viability. In my view, not only working under an employment relationship, but also volunteering and being determined to do what one can at home, depending

•10 **Irodori leaf business**

Irodori Co., Ltd. merchandises leaves and flowers used as decor in Japanese cuisine. Value was added to these products by sorting them according to color, size, and quality. The company employs approximately 190 elderly people with an average age of 70.

as little as possible on others, are important. Otherwise it will be impossible to provide public assistance to those who really need it.

Considering that the burden on young people will increase greatly in the future, I think it is the duty of the elderly themselves to also have the heart to work hard for the general good.

Morioka: I think it is important to have social training so that the elderly feel motivated and aware. Rather than providing only systemic help and monetary support, I think training is necessary so that they can think on their own about what kind of lives they will lead and what they view as important in life. Role models are also necessary, but idealizing these alone is a problem, so I feel that there needs to be a mood or climate in society whereby each individual is encouraged to promote his or her own motivation and awareness.

Dr. Butler said that rights come with duties and responsibilities. President Obama also referred to “a new era of responsibility” in his inaugural address. I think people must recognize that they are citizens first before being elderly persons, and they must act as citizens first.

Fujita: Generally speaking, Japanese people are not used to the

idea of citizenship in which each individual contributes somehow to the good of the country, so I think this area is very weak. However, I do not think that all of the elderly, who comprise over 20 percent of the population, are weaklings who should be protected.

Otsu: As one who writes articles on social security, I am always forced to think about what social weaklings are. This was mentioned earlier, but is the necessary support really getting to people who need public assistance, people who we must help with our taxes? For example, if we think about insurance premiums and tax payments, I feel strongly that we must also extend a public hand to the impoverished in their 20s and 30s who are distanced from the social safety net, as well as to young couples who are burdened mentally and financially with childrearing.

The elderly have no income and are becoming weaker physically, so they are referred to as weaklings, but as I said repeatedly, the elderly actually have tremendous abilities and assets, so we cannot make cuts across the board based only on age. Sometimes young people are weaklings, and sometimes there are people who are old but are blessed with abilities and wealth. Unless we think of a new approach to social security from this perspective, it is

as clear as day that finances will not last, so I feel that this should be considered seriously.

Fujita: The notion that the elderly are weaklings is also a problem in textbooks. In textbooks for compulsory education, the elderly and persons with disabilities are portrayed stereotypically as poor, pitiful people to whom we should be kind.

This may teach students to be kind to the elderly and persons with disabilities, but it only looks at the weak from above and sympathizes instead of working towards making use of their abilities. This is ludicrous even from an educational standpoint. In that sense, society must change, and the mind-set of the elderly also must change.

Morioka: Eleven countries are members of the ILC, and in the process of exchanging various information, I have felt that Japan is at the top level in terms of both system and society as a place for the elderly to live. This is directly reflected in

the average life expectancy, which continues to be the highest in the world. However, as Mr. Otsu mentioned at the beginning, I am not quite sure whether or not the elderly themselves are truly happy about being able to live long.

In Japan, the era of wishing for long life is over, and now we have entered an era in which the quality of long life for each person is questioned. Unless elderly people have their own goals and vision about what to do with their long life, they will become dissatisfied and grumbling senior citizens.

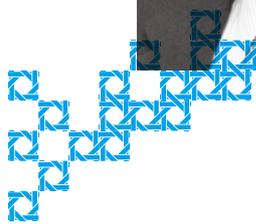
Putting a social framework in place, of course, is important, but I am hoping that a Japanese-style productive aging comes from each elderly person becoming aware of his or her position as a member of society and taking responsibility as a member of society.

(1/21/2009)

Photography: Masahiro Minato



“ *It is also necessary for each elderly person to realize and take responsibility for supporting society.* ”





Participants:

Akira Kajimoto

Senior Researcher, Asahi Institute of Journalism

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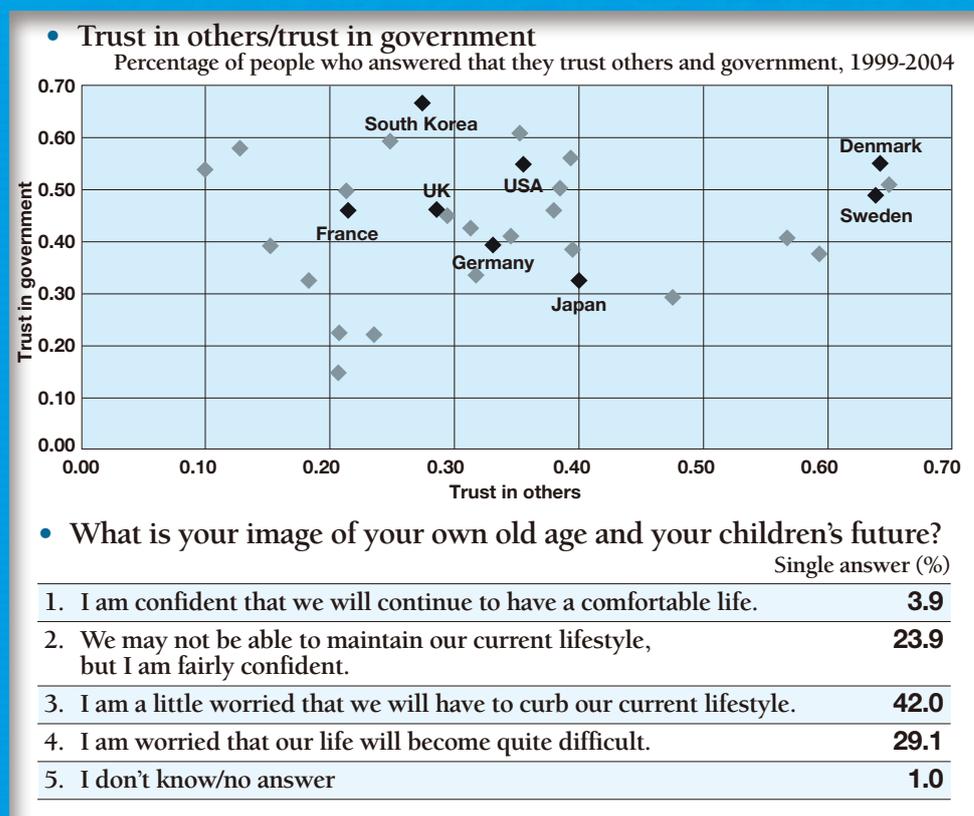
Director, Social Insurance Medical Fee Payment Fund

Roundtable Discussion

3

Hope and Security in an Aged Society with Fewer Children

Proposal for Employment-Based Life Security



Source: World Values Survey – Trust in others/trust in civic service

Source: Public Opinion Survey on the Future Image of Japanese Society, 2007



Takashige Komoda

Director General, Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards



Taro Miyamoto

Professor, Graduate School of Law, Hokkaido University

The net of trust in Japanese society is said to be rapidly weakening. Trust in others is still high compared with other countries, but trust in politics and government is diminishing greatly. A vicious cycle of uncertainty and distrust especially permeates the social security system, which is the backbone of life in an aged society with fewer children.

Considering that over 70 percent of people feel uncertain about the future, what is now necessary to ensure that Japan becomes a hopeful, dependable, and active society? We looked at this from various viewpoints.

Looking Back at the 10 Years since the Publication of “Social Security and National Livelihood”

Kajimoto: In 1999, the Ministry of Health and Welfare published a white paper entitled “Social Security and National Livelihood,” which provided an outlook on social security in the 21st century. Ten years have passed since this white paper was published, and I have a strong impression that people have rapidly lost trust in social security. I would like to hear everyone’s stance on how

we should interpret these ten years, and what will happen going forward.

First, I would like to summarize, from my standpoint as a newspaper journalist who has covered social security for many years. The Koizumi Administration made sweeping reforms in pensions, long-term care, and healthcare, but reforms without really increasing the burden through higher consumption taxes and other means were unrealistic. Since then, there has been a polarization of the middle class, a widening disparity between rich and poor, and other similar phenomena, all of which can

be regarded as the expense paid for reforms. In addition, from last year through this year, the world has fallen into a global recession, resulting in an inability to secure financial resources and a serious employment crisis. The best effort was made at reforms, but I think people are more uncertain now than ever before.

If I were to summarize these ten years, I would say that they were marked by thrashing around in an attempt to seal up financial resources for social security and to balance benefits and expenses under the circumstances of a rapidly aging society and a flagging economy.

First of all, I would like to hear from Mr. Nakamura, who played a central role when the Ministry of Health and Welfare wrote this white paper.

Nakamura: I would like to talk first about the history behind the “Social Security and National Livelihood” white paper. The social security system was significantly expanded in 1973, which is known as the first year of welfare. In the 1980s, social security grew almost consistently with economic growth. From 1980 to 1990, social security benefits almost doubled from 24 trillion yen to 47 trillion yen, but social security expenses as a percentage of national income only rose from 12% to 13.5%. This is indicative of the fact that the economy was also growing.

However, as seen in the deterioration of health insurance finances along with the collapse of the so-called bubble economy, growth in social security expenses greatly exceeded growth in the economy. Therefore, in the latter half of the 1990s, hitherto unimaginable discussions about rethinking social security, such as abolishing employees’ pensions and privatizing health insurance, occurred in the Economic Strategy Council.

While such extreme discussions occurred, social security expenses as a percentage of national income rose from 13.5 percent in 1990 to over 20 percent in 2000. In this context, the White Paper on Social Security and National Livelihood attempted to start over and analyze social security.

In these ten years since 1999, there have been many discussions and opinions about social security, and there have been attempts at bipartisan discussions as well, but these were unsuccessful, and ten years ended without establishing a clear direction. In terms of the pension problem, many opinions have been expressed, one of which was that basic pensions alone should be financed with taxes, but we are yet to see a convergence of opinions. With regard to healthcare system reform as well, after a long debate, we arrived at a healthcare system for the old-old, but there is still debate over abolishing it, and a national consen-

sus has not been reached. I dare say that these ten years were full of confusion and turmoil.

Komoda: 1999 was a year in which an LDP-LP coalition and an LDP-LP-Komeito coalition government were established. The average economic growth rate was around 0.8 percent during the ten years from 1993 when the Hosokawa coalition government was established until 2002, so 1999 was the middle of the “lost decade” in which the Japanese economy suffered from non-performing loans. The average annual growth rate from 2002 to 2007, said to be a period of economic expansion longer than the Izanagi boom period, was over two percent, so the Koizumi Administration was blessed with the fortune of a global economic boom.

With the reorganization of cabinet ministries in January 2001, the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy was established, and the Koizumi Administration began in April 2001. I helped for 18 months in the secretariat and saw the so-called Koizumi structural reforms quite closely, but the source of debate over structural reforms and deregulation was Ichiro Ozawa’s statement, “The Grand Canyon has no fences.”^{•1} The biggest problems under discussion in the Council at the time were social overhead capital, social security, and the relationship between central and

local governments. The government strongly felt that a further expansion in expenses would lead to economic and fiscal failure. Therefore, emphasis was placed on creating an efficient system by curbing increases in the fiscal burden. I think “the macro economic slide system” of pensions is also a result of this, but that included, there are many things that only the Koizumi Administration could have done. At the same time, however, I cannot deny that much stress was placed in this process, and we are now paying the price in some areas.

Miyamoto: People tend to argue that these ten years were dominated by Koizumi’s structural reforms, which ruined Japan, but I think we need to take a step back in order to see the big picture, to see the current situation accurately.

I think there were two opposing trends which led to the current situation.

The first was a trend toward improving social security in Japan, namely conducting universalistic reforms, such as efforts led at the time by Mr. Nakamura. I refer to social security and employment security collectively as “life security.” Japan until then had focused on employment security, while social security functioned as a supplement to this.

Employment security had been built on two pillars: the custom of

•1 “The Grand Canyon has no fences”

A comparative phrase used to express that while Japanese tourist sites take the utmost measures and regulate behavior in order to prevent accidents, in the United States, there are not even fences at the Grand Canyon. It is used to raise awareness of “individual responsibility.” This phrase became famous in Ichiro Ozawa’s book, Japan’s Rebuilding Plan (Kodansha, 1993).

•2 Trend of Social Security System in Japan after 1995

1995	<i>Recommendations of the Advisory Council on Social Security</i>
1997	<i>Enactment of Long-Term Care Insurance Law</i>
1998	<i>Mid-term summary regarding social welfare basic structural reforms</i>
1999	<i>Publication of "Social Security and National Livelihood"</i>
2000	<i>Long-Term Care Insurance Law goes into force</i>
2006	<i>Enactment of the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act</i>

long-term employment in public corporations and large companies in major cities, and the system of creating jobs through public works in rural areas. However, based on the view that it would be impossible to rely only on family to support the elderly after retirement, particularly with respect to long-term care and medical treatment, reforms toward universalistic social security had already begun to take form as policies and systems in the second half of the 1990s.^{•2}

Meanwhile, another trend progressed at a pace faster than the above: the demise of the employment security system. The demise of the employment security system gained momentum in the middle of the 1990s. Of the two pillars supporting employment security, the system of creating jobs in rural areas through public works supported the lives of people well, despite the fact that they frequently involved conflicts of interest.

However, the ratio of public works expenses to GDP, which at 6.4 percent in 1996 was much higher than in other developed countries, suddenly declined after 1996 to 3.2 percent by 2008, which is less than the reported ratio in France. It is true that Koizumi's structural reforms accelerated this decline, but in fact it had already begun before then.

The other pillar, namely the custom of medium- to long-term em-

ployment in public corporations and large companies, also was beginning to change. 1999, the year when the White Paper on Social Security and National Livelihood was published, was actually an epoch-making year, because on the one hand there was a revision of the Worker Dispatch Law symbolizing the demise of the employment security system, while on the other hand the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society was passed and the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was revised. In short, gender equality became established both legally and institutionally in tandem with the continued demise of the employment security system.

At any rate, because this occurred in conjunction with the demise of employment security, universalistic reforms were tripped up at least for a while. In the first place, the National Pension system was created mainly for self-employed persons who retire gradually, but because of employment trouble, temporary and part-time workers came into the system and reversed the percentages, such that in 2005, temporary and part-time workers accounted for 24 percent of the participants, while self-employed persons accounted for just 17 percent.

Likewise, I think that the National Health Insurance system was created with self-employed persons in mind, but in 2002, individuals without

jobs or careers accounted for more than 50 percent of participants. Just as the social security system was moving toward universalistic reforms, employment broke down and jolted its very foundations.

In these two trends, will the demise of employment security undermine the intentions of universalistic reforms? Or will universalistic reforms become stronger by incorporating employment mobility as a variable? We must realize that we are at this crossroad now.

Political Distrust Must Be Eradicated to Improve the Social Security System

Kajimoto: People with different stances have different ways of understanding, so I listened with great interest. There have been many attempts to stabilize and improve social security over these last ten years, and we all have a common understanding that they have not worked well.

Komoda: Thanks to the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, transparency has increased considerably with respect to policy debate and budget formation process beginning with the “Honebuto no Hoshin” (Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural Reform). However, with respect to the expectation that things automatically

would become more efficient through fiscal tightening, in reality this did not necessarily happen. It is very difficult to improve social security without increasing the burden on people. I don't think people would be adamant against increasing the burden. I think politicians should think more carefully about how to propose and explain this. In order to persuade people, they will also need to take into consideration the characteristics of Japanese people. We Japanese are very sensitive to the sense of equality. Even with regard to parking violations and train ticket inspection, we find it unacceptable that some are caught while others get away undetected.

Likewise, in terms of social security, I think that the root of the problem lies in the feelings of distrust, caused by the fact that some people benefit and others lose from the system.

Miyamoto: I think it is a matter of how we think about the position of Japanese-style welfare. If we position it in relation to the “three worlds”^{•3} proposed by Danish sociologist Esping-Andersen, the U.S. leaves both social security and employment up to the market instead of being proactive, while Sweden is proactive on both. Sweden aimed for synergistic effects where social security generates supporting services, which create jobs for people.

Meanwhile, Germany spends

•3 **Three worlds**

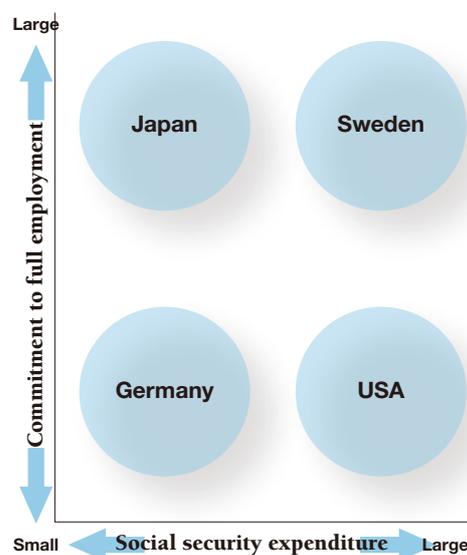
Categorization according to the welfare regime theory, a new concept of welfare state proposed by Gosta Esping-Andersen (1947-). The three worlds are the liberal welfare state, the conservative welfare state, and the social democratic welfare state.

money on social security but has questionable employment. Germany is currently working on changes to shift the primary weight to childcare support.

Japan was very strong in employment, but social security was not very large considering the size of the country's expenditures.

Nonetheless, I do not think the Japanese model is wrong. Rather, it is only natural to provide support for earning a living through employment instead of through social security, and European and American welfare reform is shifting toward "welfare to work," so Japan can be said to have led the way.

In short, until now, Japanese-style life security has been based on a trinity structure, and the practice of long-term employment at large companies, in-company welfare, public works, various protections and regulations, and long-term care and childcare that rely on families have



worked well structurally. Various social risks have been absorbed on the condition that salaried workers belong to companies, self-employed persons to their particular industries, and housewives to their families.

However, in fact, there were many problems with the Japanese model. Thus the universalistic reforms, but the bigger problem was in focusing only on male breadwinners, who were kept by companies and industries, and cared for their entire lives. The government's policy thus is to create a framework so that companies and industries do not fail and to ensure that the income of male breadwinners is equally shared with families.

Universalistic reforms, in my opinion, were really supposed to create and support a more mobile framework in contrast to this closed framework.

This Japanese-style system, with its negatives and positives, is demonstrating its negative side in distrust of politics and the government, as Mr. Komoda mentioned.

That is, as a society, things worked reasonably well, because everyone had a place to work and we did not have to spend much on welfare and social security, but as the limits of this closed system and special interests have given rise to scandals, and vulnerabilities of social security as a right appear one after another, people's distrust of politics and govern-

ment has become very strong.

However, as Mr. Komoda also indicated, judging from public opinion surveys, if the government ensures security, then people understand that they inevitably must foot the expense to a certain extent.

According to a survey that I conducted with Professor Jiro Yamaguchi of Hokkaido University⁴, when asked, “What kind of society do you want to make Japan?” 58 percent of respondents answered, “A welfare society like in Northern Europe.” Meanwhile, however, when asked how to come close to Northern Europe, only 17 percent answered, “Raising consumption taxes would be fine.” This appears contradictory and self-serving, but I think it demonstrates what people really think, given past experiences. Since the government cannot be completely trusted, if taxes are raised and there is no reward for this, then people would rather defend themselves instead of depending on the government.

Discussing costs and who pays, strengthening social security, and moving toward universalism while building trust in politics is required now, in my opinion.

Nakamura: I also read those survey results. The majority wish for a society that emphasizes welfare as in Northern Europe, but nearly 30 percent answer that bureaucratic power

should be weakened. In addition, to the question of how to secure the financial resources for social security, nearly half say that extensive government reforms are the answer. People want a welfare society but are very distrustful of the government and cannot trust the government to take care of welfare, which is an unfortunate situation full of contradictions.

I have lived in Sweden and found the level of trust in government to be quite different. In Sweden, everyone believes that welfare services must be funded by their own taxes, so the relationship between costs and services is very clear. People either ask for more services despite an increase in the tax burden or they lower taxes and tolerate the current level of services.

Transparency is important, and so the connection between benefits and payments in long-term care insurance is relatively similar to this. However, in the case of National Health Insurance, for instance, the National Treasury pays half, so the relationship is difficult to see.

Also, this is similar to what Mr. Komoda said, but a political scientist once wrote about the characteristics of Japanese people, saying that while a great many people answered that they would want to help someone in trouble, they also answered that they would not use services themselves if they were in trouble. I think policies need to be made with

⁴ “Public Opinion Survey on the Future Image of Japanese Society” 2007

a good understanding of this very strong Japanese sense of independence, confidence, and pride.

*Employment-Based Social Security
Also Included in Proposal by the
Council for Realizing a Secure Society*

Kajimoto: There were two major reviews of social security policy: one by the National Council on Social Security in 2008 and another by the Council for Realizing a Secure Society in 2009. Professor Miyamoto was a member of the Council for Realizing a Secure Society, so I would like to ask for his assessment of this.

Miyamoto: The National Council on Social Security was established by the Fukuda Cabinet, which distanced itself from the Abe Cabinet that took over after Koizumi, following his policy. The purpose of this council was to develop a short- to medium-term outlook for healthcare, long-term care and pension, and childcare, which were considered the main components of social security until then. In contrast, the Council for Realizing a Secure Society, in which I was involved, talked more about the image of the Japanese state overall. It seems like the order should have been reversed, but the National Council on Social Security went into specifics without discussing the image of Japan first as

they should have done, so we were asked to think about the image of Japan. As Mr. Komoda mentioned earlier, if the symbols of the Koizumi Administration's prime minister-led reforms were Minister Takenaka and the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, then the Council for Realizing a Secure Society, in the words of Minister Yosano, was positioned to think independently about the future of Japan.

Fifteen people from a wide range of viewpoints met together and held intense discussions for approximately three months. They all agreed on the importance of the Japanese-style system through a lively discussion. The resulting report was published on June 15, 2009. At the discussion table, I talked about realizing a secure society based on employment, and at the same time I proposed adding employment and education to the three mainstays of social security, namely, healthcare, long-term care and pensions, and childcare.

If we think about social security as usual only in terms of healthcare, long-term care and pensions, and childcare, we will not be able to link security to dynamism, but if we add employment and education, we will be able to provide security throughout the lifecycle. This is far from passive security, but security in the sense that if any unexpected trouble arises during the lifecycle, the dynamism to break a new path would be

generated. I believe we accomplished something by showing a way to link security to dynamism by adding employment and education to the discussion of the National Council on Social Security.

Kajimoto: The National Council on Social Security should be lauded for doing an estimated simulation of pensions, healthcare, and long-term care through 2025. In particular, the Council presented future images of the systems for providing healthcare and long-term care, which were unclear until now.

The Council for Realizing a Secure Society conveyed the message that what we need is life security in the form of social security and employment security, and that employment is the core of life security. This was a very new and noteworthy proposal.

Nakamura: I think it is very meaningful that the Council for Realizing a Secure Society created an image of our nation and an image of our soci-

ety that could provide a basis for social security. Economic growth strategy must be linked with a secure society, and employment is where this link takes place. In addition, instead of arranging healthcare, long-term care and pensions, childcare, employment, and education as five equal pillars, employment is clearly positioned as the anchor in this excellent report. With this as the basic framework, I think it will be possible to develop the various proposals about social security under debate in the National Council on Social Security.

Komoda: I, too, think that a secure society anchored by employment is a very good phrase. The image of our nation as a construction state is not good, but particularly in rural areas, jobs were often created in this way. There were many problems, so it was not wrong to move away from these, but confusion often arose from pursuing things suddenly without preparing replacements first. This report, which calls for



“ *If we add employment and education, we will be able to provide security throughout the lifecycle.* ”

developing social security based on employment, gave us a new direction in rebuilding social security. This was a very meaningful proposal. The Democratic Party did not get involved in this process, but if they become the political party in power after the election, they will be in a good position to reap the benefits.

Kajimoto: The link between employment and social security actually became quite visible when the job crisis surfaced as a result of the global recession. In fact, with the globalization of the economy, since the mid-1990s, the number of irregular employees has continued to increase to 17 million, representing one third of all employees. The economy was good, so it was not much of a problem, but now the global recession has clearly shown how unstable the position of these irregular employees is.

From now on, for both regular and irregular employees, achieving employment stability will be closely related to social security and thus something we must think about.

Nakamura: Looking back, until the bubble economy collapsed, Japan never faced a serious employment problem, so in the view of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, employment was a given and social security was designed on the premise of employment. Employment itself es-

entially was lifetime employment with seniority-based wages at each company, and Japan's social security system was developed based on this without much doubt about its future.

Now social security stands at a crossroad, so naturally the task at hand is to rebuild it into a system that can respond to the current employment situation and changes in employment. However, this is easier said than done. When the pension system was revamped in 1994, we proposed to apply employees' pensions to part-time workers, but employers flatly refused this. Even though people are aware, in reality there are high hurdles, and there has not been much progress in stabilizing regular and irregular employment.

Komoda: The employment issue is really a serious problem. Measures taken by the government up to now, such as the Employment Adjustment Subsidy, have preserved jobs within companies for the time being, but employment indicators could further worsen. As a result of the global recession, the production activity level at companies has fallen to approximately 80 percent of the most recent peak level, so even if the economy has hit bottom, the number of unemployed could still rise. Mismatch unemployment also is rising, and this refers not only to mismatching of occupation but also to mismatching of

employment type. Not only those who need labor, i.e. companies hiring, but also those who supply labor, i.e. workers, are major contributing factors to the increase in diversification of employment types, so in this sense, we must hammer out short-term measures while maintaining a medium-term orientation.

Kajimoto: In such a serious employment situation, how should we link employment with social security? As a disciple of the Miyamoto School (*he laughs*), I certainly would like to hear Professor Miyamoto's opinion as an advocate of this.

Miyamoto: I merely summarized and analyzed the viewpoints that have arisen in welfare reform discussion over the past 20-30 years, so there is not much originality on my part. . . (*he laughs*)

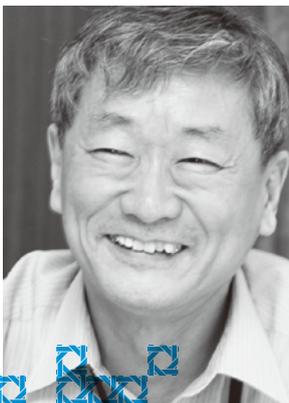
At any rate, now we are at a crossroad, and reform must address employment mobility. In that case, I think there are four points regarding the link between employment and

social security.

First is social security for leading people to employment. This includes childcare services that enable women to work, job training so that young people can get jobs, and lifetime education.

Second is social security for increasing rewards. In Europe, an extraordinary amount of effort has been placed on social security leading to employment, but in Japan, where the employment rate is quite high, we need to think about improving working conditions a little more. Examples of this include tax deductions with benefits to supplement the incomes of the working poor, who have low incomes despite working.

Third is job creation. In the 1980s and 1990s, Keynesian job creation was regarded as already behind the times, and only work that could survive on the global market was regarded as important. Therefore, many argued that job training should be done and people relocated to these divisions in the forefront.



“ *The link between employment and social security actually became quite visible when the job crisis surfaced as a result of the global recession.* ”

•5 **Sixth Industry**

A new type of primary industry in which farmers are revitalized by getting involved in as far as secondary industry (processing) and tertiary industry (distribution and sales). Primary + Secondary + Tertiary = Sixth Industry. Refer to "Global Information Journal on Longevity Society," No. 9.

•6 **Tokumi Odagiri (1959-)**

Professor at Meiji University

Northern Europe was taking this direction, but such divisions in the forefront actually cannot absorb all the people who come.

In this sense, Northern Europe has come to adopt Japan's view that it is not entirely meaningless to create jobs in rural areas. Of course, giving priority only to roads and dams and other public works like in the past will cause problems, but it is necessary to realize that labor unabsorbed by divisions in the forefront cannot just be put out onto the street. The "Sixth Industry"^{•5} proposed by Professor Tokumi Odagiri^{•6} et al is a very good example of the fact that the idea of creating jobs in rural areas not involving public works is starting to take hold.

Fourth is work sharing. In order to secure high-quality employment, work sharing is also very important, and in the working hours account system used in Germany and the Netherlands, working hours can be saved and withdrawn at any time.

By linking these four points together well, I think social security and employment will come together well.

Give Thought to the Diversity of Senior Citizens and Make Most of Their Experience and Abilities

Kajimoto: The proportion of the elderly already exceeds 20 percent,

and 70 percent of social security benefit payments actually go to the elderly, but of course it is not right to regard all senior citizens as the weak of society. Considering living conditions, their savings are the highest among all generations, and their outflows also are higher than those of people in their twenties, according to survey results. Thus, policies with an understanding of this situation are necessary, but meanwhile, there are great differences among senior citizens in terms of wealth and health condition.

While providing sufficient medical care, long-term care, and public assistance when necessary, we must think of a way in which healthy, independent senior citizens can be involved with society just as other generations. We must respond with ideas about how to use limited resources effectively.

Miyamoto: The average household savings of those aged 65 or over is quite high at 25 million yen, but if we look at a breakdown of this, 35% have 10 million yen or less, and 18% have 40 million yen or more, so this affluent class obviously is pushing up the average amount.

In this sense, as Mr. Kajimoto has said, instead of lumping together all senior citizens, who are quickly becoming a majority of society, I think it is very important to consider how to respond to their individual

differences.

Even in terms of realizing employment-based social security, utilization of senior citizens is a very important factor. In discussions of the Council for Realizing a Secure Society, one of the major topics was how to achieve participation in the labor force among senior citizens. If we look at Northern Europe, which has built a society based on employment, it is prohibited in Sweden to lay off workers on account of age until the age of 67, and the employment rate of senior citizens in Northern Europe is the highest in Europe.

We can see from this that even with strong public welfare, work is the highest indicator of well-being.

Taichi Sakaiya proposes the idea of Pensions While Working, which encourages pensioners to work in local communities for enough pay to supplement their pensions, thereby revitalizing Japanese local community with this small labor force.

However, entering local community smoothly after retirement would require effort by both communities and senior citizens, but communities need the experience and abilities of senior citizens, and likewise it is important for senior citizens to find new purposes for living in the local community. Who will move forward with this match-making and how? If this can be realized, I feel that it will open big possibilities.

Nakamura: Japanese people have the world's longest remaining life after age 65, and there are many people with a high degree of physical and mental independence. They are a relatively fortunate group, so I agree that it is very important to discuss how senior citizens can actively participate in society. Perhaps the NPO activities, through which Mr. Komoda was involved in legislation, may end up as one type of participation by senior citizens.

Komoda: According to the Revised Law Concerning Stabilization of Employment of Older Persons, taken in effect in 2006, individual companies are working in various ways toward continuing the employment of senior citizens. Meanwhile, not a few senior citizens reject invitations to continue employment and decide to join an NPO in which they are interested. Ten years have passed since the NPO Law became effective, and many issues are arising with concern to NPO activities. For example, low-budget projects contracted by local governments have produced a new kind of working poor. However, from now on, NPO activities should be able to take a larger role in contributing to society, and they certainly are a place where senior citizens can use their experience and abilities.

Where Is Social Security in Japan Headed?

Kajimoto: Lastly, I would like to ask where social security in Japan is headed. What is the outlook 10 years from now and also in 2025 when the baby-boom generation become the old-old?

Nakamura: Social security is the biggest challenge of domestic politics, and social security policy may even determine the government administration. That is how big social security has become and how mature Japanese society has become. Social security definitely is a topic that the government must address seriously, but it is also a system that people must support. In this sense, people must carefully protect and nurture the system, and for this purpose, it is imperative to provide accurate information and have discussions based thereon. I think the responsibilities of journalism will increase in the future so that people

can make wise decisions, and I want to believe that wise choices by the people will guide the system in a better direction.

Komoda: In employment-based social security, I think that qualitative improvement concerning labor is important. In other words, while the quality of employment, i.e. working conditions, improves, the quality of labor must also improve; otherwise people's lives will not improve. As a national strategy, investment in the qualitative improvement of human capital is extremely important in my opinion.

In the 1980s, I lived for three years in the socialist country of Czechoslovakia and daily experienced the costs of an undemocratic society. Therefore, although there are many costs of democracy in Japan, I believe that they are much less than the costs of non-democracy.

Under the precious democracy, people must have more interest in how taxes are used, and I also think that journalism as mentioned by Mr.



“ *Social security is a topic that the government must address seriously, but also a system that people must support.* ”

Nakamura and retired public officials like us must play a role in turning society in that direction.

I want to say, also to myself, that democracy naturally is something created and supported by everyone.

Miyamoto: Mr. Nakamura and Mr. Komoda talked earlier about the characteristics of Japanese people. It is impossible to explain Japanese people across the board, but I think we can say that Japanese are not individualists. They always pay attention to getting along with those around them, but why doesn't this lead to more public-spiritedness?

Actually, there are two theories about whether or not Japan is a trust-based society. The first is a theory by political scientist Francis Fukuyama⁷, that "Japan is a high-trust society."

In contrast, social psychologist Toshio Yamagishi⁸ says, "Japan is not a trust-based society even though it is a secure society." People are connected by industries and companies, but trust beyond this is

very weak and ends with connections among one's own relatives only. Therefore, one can feel secure about someone as long as he is a relative, but trust beyond this relationship is weak.

If this is true, there are major new challenges in widening the ring of trust built among relatives. We are a culture that thinks too much, and we somehow must break through the tendency to stick only to family. Fortunately or unfortunately, we can no longer stick only to family now.

I think that new connections which arise among Japanese will lead to a trust-based society that goes beyond family-based society, and this will become the power of people and society to support the upgrade of universalistic welfare that I mentioned earlier.

I have spoken very abstractly, but I think that this is a good starting point.

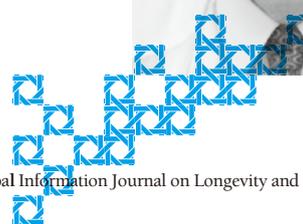
(8/7/2009)

Photography: Masahiro Minato

⁷ **Francis Fukuyama (1952-)**
American political scientist

⁸ **Toshio Yamagishi (1948-)**
Professor, Department of Behavioral
Science Graduate School of Letters,
Hokkaido University

“ While the quality of employment improves,
the quality of labor must also improve;
otherwise people's lives will not improve. ”



Ayako Fujita

Professor, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University

Ayako Fujita was born in 1946 and has a Ph.D. in human science. She came to her current position in 2003 after working at Osaka University School of Human Sciences as a research associate, at the Osaka Prefectural Senior Center, and at Kyoto Koka Women's University as a professor. Her publications include "A Super-Aged Society Is Supported by the Elderly" (Osaka University Press) and "Psychology of the Elderly and the Disabled" (Editor, Minerva Shobo).

Kiichiro Horiike

Advisor, Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka (NPO)

Kiichiro Horiike was born in 1941. He was in charge of production management and sales education at Hitachi, Ltd. but resigned from Hitachi before the mandatory retirement age to take part in NPO activities. Besides being an advisor Senior SOHO Salon Mitaka, he serves as a secretary at Greater-Kanto Community Business Promotion Council and as a Local Community Revitalization Evangelist appointed by the Cabinet Secretariat. He co-authored "Senior Citizens, Let's Return to Our Communities with IT" (NTT Publishing Co., Ltd.).

Mitsuhiro Ishida

Manager, Welfare for Elderly Section, Welfare Department, Inagi City

Mitsuhiro Ishida was born in 1957. He has a Ph.D. in economics and joined Inagi City Government in 1979. Prior to his current position, he served as Senior Staff, Long-term Care Insurance Section, Inagi City, Senior Planner for Health and Welfare for the Elderly, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and then Chief, Long-term Care Insurance Section, Inagi City.

Akira Kajimoto

Senior Researcher, Asahi Institute of Journalism

Akira Kajimoto was born in 1948. He joined The Asahi Shimbun Company in 1973. He worked in the News Division of the Hokkaido Office and in the Political News Division of the Tokyo Head Office, and held positions as deputy editor of *Shukan Asahi* (weekly magazine) and political news editor in the Political News Division of Asahi Shimbun. In 2003, he began working as an editorial writer (in charge of social security and politics). He came to his present position in 2008. In addition, he is a visiting professor at Waseda University Graduate School (The Okuma School of Public Management).

Takashige Komoda

Director General, Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards

Takashige Komoda was born in 1946. He joined the Economic Planning Agency in 1972. After holding positions as director of Social Policy Division, Economic Planning Agency, assistant vice-minister, Cabinet Office, and director-general of National and Regional Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, he became the vice research director-general of Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT). He came to his present position in 2006. From 1981 to 1984, he worked at the Embassy of Japan in Czechoslovakia.

Taro Miyamoto

Professor, Graduate School of Law, Hokkaido University

Taro Miyamoto was born in 1958. His field of expertise is comparative social security theory. After holding positions such as professor in the College of Policy Science at Ritsumeikan University, he came to his present position in 2002. In 1998, he worked as a visiting researcher at the National Institute for Working Life in Sweden. His publications include *Welfare Politics: Japan's Social Security and Democracy* (Yuhikaku) and *Comparative Welfare Politics: Actors and Strategies of Institutional Change* (Waseda University Press).

Shigeo Morioka

President, ILC-Japan

Shigeo Morioka was born in 1922 and joined Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical (now Astellas Pharma) in 1947. He served as president, chairperson, and advisor. During his tenure, he was chairperson of the Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations of Japan and vice chairperson of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA). He has been in his current position since 1998.

Shuichi Nakamura

Director, Social Insurance Medical Fee Payment Fund

Shuichi Nakamura was born in 1948. He joined the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1973. After holding positions as chief of the Division of Welfare for the Elderly, chief of the Pension Division, chief of the Policy Planning Division, Minister's Secretariat, deputy vice-minister for health insurance and health policy, and director-general of the Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly, he became the director-general of the Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau in 2005. He came to his present position in 2008. From 1981 to 1984, he worked at the Embassy of Japan in Sweden.

Takeo Ogawa

Professor, Yamaguchi Prefectural University Graduate School of Health and Welfare

(Professor, Faculty of Social welfare, Kumamoto-Gakuen University since April 2010)

Takeo Ogawa was born in 1943. He has a Ph.D. in literature. Prior to his current position, he was an assistant professor at Miyazaki University, professor at Yamaguchi University and then emeritus professor at Kyushu University Graduate School. He serves as the chairperson of Yamaguchi Prefecture Health and Welfare Promotion Council for the Elderly. He is a director of Active Aging Business Center, a specified nonprofit organization. His publications include "Community Development by the Older Persons" (Agricultural Policy Research Committee, Inc.) and so on.

Kazuo Otsu

Reporter, Yomiuri Shimbun, Tokyo Headquarters, Social Security Division

Kazuo Otsu was born in 1969 and joined the Editorial Bureau of the Yomiuri Shimbun at its Tokyo Headquarters in 1993. He came to his present position in December 2000 after working in the politics division. From 2004 to 2005, he was a visiting researcher at Columbia University in the United States. His subjects of focus are employment, decreasing fertility, and pensions. His publications include "Long-Term Care Hell: America" and "Loneliness in a Castaway Society" (Nippon Hyoron-sha).

Toshikazu Togari

President, Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (JEED)

Toshikazu Togari was born in 1947 and joined the Ministry of Labour (now the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) in 1971. He became Vice-Minister in 2004 after serving in positions such as Deputy Director-General of the Employment Security Bureau, Director-General of Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Director-General of the Employment Security Bureau, and Vice Minister for Policy Coordination, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. He retired in 2006 and assumed his current position. Since April 2008, he has served as visiting professor at Hosei University Graduate School.

Tomoji Yokoishi

Managing Director and Vice President, Irodori Inc.

Tomoji Yokoishi was born in 1958. He joined Kamikatsu-cho Agricultural Cooperative as an agricultural operations instructor in 1979. In 1986, he planned and organized Irodori, a garnish distribution business. He became a director of Irodori, Inc., a joint public-private venture, in 1999 and became managing director and vice president in 2005. In 2007, he was chosen as one of the "100 Social Entrepreneurs Who Change the World" by the Japanese version of Newsweek magazine. He is the author of "Why Not Sell Leaves – An Underpopulated Town's Regeneration from the Bottom" (Soft Bank Publishing).

ILC Japan Attends “Alzheimer’s in an Aging Society” at New York

A distinguished multidisciplinary group of experts working in the field of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia met in New York on September 22 for the first in a series of dinner salons on Alzheimer’s in an Aging Society. Dr. Kazuo Hasegawa, who serves as the chairperson of the organizing committee, attended the meeting to represent ILC-Japan. He presented the results of the Japan’s campaign to raise dementia awareness and establish communities designed to ensure the dignity of people with dementia.

Alzheimer’s in an Aging Society

Hosted by: ILC-USA and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Place: Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Date: September 22, 2009

Hosts:

Robert Butler, M.D.

*President & CEO,
ILC-USA (New York, USA)*

Linda Fried, M.D., MPH

*Dean, Mailman School of Public Health,
Columbia University (New York, USA)*

Observer:

Masako Osako, Ph.D.

*Secretary-General,
ILC Global Alliance (New York, USA)*

Participants

Daisy Acosta, M.D.

*Chairperson, Alzheimer’s Disease
International (Dominican Republic)*

Sube Banerjee, M.D.

*Professor of Mental Health and Aging,
Institute of Psychiatry,
Kings College (London, UK)*

Olivier Brandicourt, M.D.

*President and General Manager, Global
Primary Care Business Unit,
Pfizer Inc (New York, USA)*

Nick Eberstadt

*Henry Wendt Scholar in Political Economy,
American Enterprise Institute for Public
Policy Research (Washington, D.C.)*

Positioning of the meeting and expectation for the future

Robert Butler, M.D.

President & CEO, ILC-USA

On September 22, distinguished leaders in social, political, scientific, and cultural fields related to Alzheimer's disease met to begin a collaborative process. The purpose of the meeting was to let people from all over the world know that Alzheimer's disease is one of the top priorities of the modern world. For that purpose, the salon was designed to exchange information, gather wisdom, and explore possible paths for the future.

The discussion covered many topics, ranging from educational activities to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease among Japanese citizens; to advancement of research and development of new treatment; and to the expansion of assessment methodology.

In the course of discussion, we agreed on the importance of collaboration and leadership that transcends national borders, and came to a consensus that our goal requires us to clarify and focus on specific themes.

We plan to start a Web site to house any relevant documents you submit and help carry on the conversation virtually.

We welcome your suggestions.

Howard Martin Fillit, M.D.

Executive Director, Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (New York, USA)

Françoise Forette, M.D.

President, ILC-France (Paris, France)

Tomas Guilarte, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Environmental Health Sciences, Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health (Maryland, USA)

Eric J. Hall

CEO, Alzheimer's Foundation of America (New York, USA)

Kazuo Hasegawa, M.D.

*Member of Advisory Board, ILC-Japan
President Emeritus, Tokyo Dementia Care Research and Training Center (Tokyo, Japan)*

Michael W. Hodin, Ph.D.

Vice President, Public Affairs, World Wide Primary Care, Pfizer (New York, USA)

Zaven Khachaturian, Ph.D.

*President & CEO,
Lou Ruvo Brain Institute (Las Vegas, USA)*

Florence Lustman

General Inspector of Finances, Alzheimer's Plan, Ministry of the Economy (Paris, France)

Mary Mittelman, Dr.P.H.

Director of Psychosocial Research and Support Program, Center of Excellence for Brain Aging and Dementia, NYU Langone Medical Center (New York, USA)

Daniel Perry

President, Alliance for Aging Research (Washington, D.C.)

Nancy Turett

Global President, Health, Edelman (New York, USA)

Marc Wortmann

Executive Director, Alzheimer's Disease International (London, UK)

Participating in the salon



Kazuo Hasegawa, M.D.

Member of Advisory Board, ILC-Japan

President Emeritus, Tokyo Dementia Care Research and Training Center;

Professor Emeritus, St. Marianna University School of Medicine

The salon was held with the theme of Alzheimer's in an Aging Society. All participants were leading experts in Alzheimer's disease and dementia, encompassing the fields of medicine and medical care, public health, psychology, economics, public administration, pharmaceuticals, family support groups and so forth. I gave a message from ILC-Japan. What I shared was what I believe and practice in my daily life as I work for human resource development at the Tokyo center under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, as well as the campaign to build communities that are friendly to people with dementia, and the program to build the community support system for dementia. Several participants later expressed their agreement and I believe people appreciated what I had to say.

As we have entered the 21st century, we are facing the environmental challenge of global warming. I believe that for aging societies in the world, Alzheimer's disease and other dementia is a challenge comparable to global warming. We have so many unknown realms, including the mechanism of brain function and that of aging. In light of the measures for people with disability that have only recently been introduced, it is desirable that we build an international network to work out the problems. I am truly thankful to be part of the first step towards such a goal.

Alzheimer's in an Aging Society Salon Report

Topic 1: *In light of the current global conditions, what is called for to promote public measures and broader social activities for Alzheimer's disease?*

- It is very unfortunate, but not much progress has been made since 1978 with regard to Alzheimer's disease. For example, neither its diagnosis nor treatment has been perfected, and treatment drugs are utterly insufficient.
- There are two approaches explored with regard to prevention and treatment; life-style based approach and biological approach. (Many of the participants believed that Alzheimer's disease was a disease and not a phenomenon arising from one's lifestyle. Some pointed out that research on prevention had been insufficient.)
- Funding for research is greatly lacking. In particular, the limited funding for longitudinal study has been a challenge.
- Alzheimer's disease will inevitably become increasingly costly. 30 years ago, the remaining life of those who developed Alzheimer's disease was 9 years. The remaining life will more dramatically increase in the future.
- For long-term care, it is important to consider the following perspectives pointed out by Dr. Hasegawa.
 - 1) An approach that is centered on Alzheimer's disease patients
 - 2) Community support system for patients and their family
 - 3) Promotion of caregiver training
- It is necessary to acknowledge that there are many people with dementia, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries.

- All countermeasures must be promoted globally.

Topic 2: *What kind of international strategy can we take to spread the understanding that Alzheimer's disease is a major political agenda, posing a tremendous challenge to the society as a whole?*

- We need a leadership that builds a powerful global campaign and a network to promote the awareness of the critical nature of the situation and to seek for the resolution. We need a strategy that:
 - 1) Helps enhance the QOL of Alzheimer's disease patients.
 - 2) Disseminates a compelling, scientifically reliable message consolidated in one voice.
 - 3) Is accompanied by the improved education and awareness among the public, politicians, health care providers, professional and family caregivers, as well as other family members.
 - 4) Ensures leadership not only by scientists but by broader talents; and values cost-effectiveness.
 - 5) Establishes international network where each country's results and accomplishments are consistently shared.
- We should learn from the AIDS movement as a model for raising public awareness and building a political platform.

Statements made by Dr. Kazuo Hasegawa (summary) at the first salon Alzheimer's in an Aging Society

Japan leads the aging world; in 2008, Japan's average life expectancy reached 79.29 years for male and 86.05 years for female.

- The longer life expectancy is accompanied by increased morbidity of dementia (7.6% in 2005 and expected to rise to 8.4% by 2015), indicating an unprecedented challenge.
- To state my conclusion first, the only proper way to address dementia is to build communities where people can live with dignity.
- Person-centered approaches and community-based support systems are the principles of services for people with dementia.
- The first key point is that the training of professional caregivers is critical for that purpose. There are three dementia care research and training centers in Japan, and they have trained about 1200 care leaders since the introduction of the long-term care insurance system in 2000. The underlying philosophy of the training is the person-centered



care proposed by T. Kitwood.

Care assessment is based on the assessment center method, integrating the patient's thought, his/her family's desire, and the caregiver's opinions.

- The second key point is community-based care. When Japan's long-term insurance program was revised in 2006, the importance of community was further emphasized with the prescribed development of community comprehensive support centers and the promotion of small-scale multifunctional core facilities. Collaborations across professions have been promoted at the same time.



*Kazuo Hasegawa speaks on
Alzheimer's in an Aging Society
(center in the photo)*

- The third key point is the establishment of local networks that support people with dementia. It is critical that all citizens understand dementia. To this end, an awareness campaign has been implemented since 2005. There are already more than 1 million citizen supporters. To date, 300 communities throughout the country have applied for the consideration of model activities, under community building campaigns to support people with dementia.
- Finally, I would like to report on our recent undertaking - the urgent project to improve the

medical care and QOL of people with dementia. This project calls for collaboration between primary care doctors and care workers, and enhanced measures to address premature dementia.

- I have introduced Japan's attempts to support people with dementia in the community. Please remember that right at this moment, people with dementia are struggling with their difficulties all over the world. I would like to remind ourselves that we have the responsibility to support the dignity of people with dementia of today.

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