

# DECISION SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

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3

Washi | Community  
Fauna | Elderly people  
Culture | Public Kitchens



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Institute of Decision Science for Sustainable Society (IDS3) Newsletter has been rescheduled to be released tri-monthly. LOCAL COMMUNITY is the theme of this issue, We encourage you to read on and navigate through domestic societies around the globe and experience the ethos of different regions in Japan and Southeast Asia.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- P2 - Building a salt road between Mexico and Japan
  - Yame city: Taxi System for Elderly
  - Collecting bugs and little fish
- P3 - Tsushima Hijikini drama and public kitchens
  - Aboard the Disaster Learning Train
  - The rise and fall of the Kakure Kirishitan in Nagasaki
- P4 - Interview with Professor Kaoru Izumi, Leader of Governance module, IDS3

## FEATURE Washiback Writer!

Dear Sir or Madam, won't you read my book? It took me years to write, will you take a look? My book is made of 'Washi', a Japanese paper, from the fibers of gampi tree, mitsumata shrub, paper mulberry, bamboo, and hemp. We asked the institute's paper pundit, Dr. Motomu Tanaka to explain why Japanese hand-made paper is so admired by artists and papermakers around the world? "The long fibers of Washi-paper gives it high tensile strength, it is difficult to tear; its alkalinity gives it excellent preservation characteristics; so it has a variety of uses, compared to short fiber western-style paper". Brushing off layers of field dust from his jacket, Tanaka continued "I have walked through agricultural mountain and fishing villages around Japan, South East Asia, and Melanesia and seen that traditional paper-making connects communities to the local nature. The production process is full of discoveries, ideas, surprises, and miracles, and although we read written human thoughts we do not know the wonderful stories behind the making of the Washi it is written upon".

After a thoughtful pause, Tanaka knitted his brow in concentration "Washi is suffering because domestic demand has fallen. The fields and the equipment to produce raw materials, the papermaking techniques, and the paper makers are all disappearing". Village collaboration has changed to employment labour as the attractiveness of growing Kozo has faded. Other factors such as progressive ageing population, incessant wildlife damage and typhoons do not encourage continuance of the traditional Washi production. However, smiling again, "demand may pick up and I need a job", Washiback Writer, Paperback Writer.



# FIELD TRIP SE

## MEXICO

### Building a salt road between Mexico and Japan



IDS<sub>3</sub> Integration team organized and implemented a field study in Mexico from February 6 to 15, 2016. The goal was to build a research bridge between Mexico and Japan. The objectives were to find connections between Mexico and Japan through similarities in art, food, environment, history and cul-

ture. We visited the National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City market, Cuernavaca Cathedral, Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in order to experience and understand our subjects. As the final work of the trip, we had a joint seminar with students on the Morelia campus of UNAM. In the seminar, each IDS<sub>3</sub> student gave a short speech: Mr. Takeuchi told a story about a salt road; Mr. Furukawa gave an insight of dietary education inspired by the

visit to the National Museum; Mr. Nakayachi introduced the history of martyrdom of 26 saints in Japan, and Ms. Song discussed fusion cultures taking into consideration the religions in both countries. After the seminar, Ms. Song said "The Mexican students were light-hearted characters, we got along well very soon and the seminar became so exciting". Mexico is one of important countries to consider due to deep interrelationships with Japan in both histories. We will keep in touch with Mexico for next visits.

## YAME

### Yame City: Taxi System for Elderly

The aging of Japan's population is rapidly progressing and we need to develop better systems to support elderly people. Yame city, Fukuoka prefecture is a study site of the governance module and has a unique system for supporting elderly using an outstanding traffic policy. To learn more, Mr. Takayasu Higashi, visited Yame city and interviewed city officers and staffs in the society of commerce and industry on December 5th, 22nd and January 19th. He established that the Yame city's unique traffic policy to support elderly people who cannot drive their cars or cannot take a



take a service in which disabled elders can call a taxi from their home to go to any destinations they want to go. The city stakeholders use this system to check the health condition of elderly passengers: for example, if an elderly does not use this taxi services for a long time, an operator makes a contact with city officers

at welfare services to verify whether he or she is in a good condition. The unique system is also useful to transport elderly people when there is a disaster. For example, when there was localized heavy rain around Kyushu area, last year, elderly people escaped to the safe spots using city taxi system. This system provides a great benefit for elders, however, there is a common financial problem to be solved: to keep this system is very costly. Mr. Higashi said "We will discuss this problem with city officers for making it better and initiate new methods to collaborate with another work".

## CAMBODIA

### Collecting bugs and little fish

Environment module and Human module members went on a field trip in Cambodia for two weeks in February 2016. The focus was to study wildlife and community forestry. The field study started in Siem Reap with a visit to Tonle Sap Lake and the nearby forest. In the forest we set up traps to collect insect samples and aquatic life from wetlands and streams. Our group visited the Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity, the Landmine museum, and the Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles to study local efforts to improve a sustainable society in Cambodia. The first phase of the trip con-

cluded with a tour of Cambodia's history with visits of Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, and Ta Prohm. During the next phase, group members flew to Phnom Penh and joined community forest researchers working in a project partly sponsored by Kyushu University. There, the forestry team collected data for remote sensing research and did maintenance on the weather tracking equipment. During the Cambodian field trip, the team interviewed leaders of community forests and recorded the status of the forest. Community forests involve the local community in the forest management and are important



for teaching the value of the forest and protecting the land. The trip was successful in collecting many wildlife samples and inspiring further research on the effectiveness of local community participation in forestry management.

# REASON of IDS3

## TSUSHIMA | Hijikini drama and public kitchens



Many Japanese use Unohana (bean-curd refuse, often called “Okara” in Japanese) and Hijikini (stewed Hijiki mixture) as traditional Japanese dishes. These are only accessible in some countryside areas, and the chances are rare if you want to taste these incomparable delicacies in city restaurants. A group of adventurous IDS<sub>3</sub> students, sailing

against the strong winds, made their way across the far-most eastern strait of Kyushu and arrived at the civil community center in Sasuna, Tsushima Island on November 24th. Stepping into a surreal community lobby, they were greeted by a slight scent of Shiitake mushrooms and oak beams: several senior people were making Hijikini, amongst them, was an agile elder, an 80-year-old aunt who was given a courtesy title “sensei” (“teacher”) by the community people since she used to teach at an elementary school. Observing the drama, IDS<sub>3</sub> bento expert Mr. Takeuchi

commented, “We need a special place like a public kitchen to make and give publicity to these unusual cuisines”. He shared his knowledge “This scene is similar to the interment facilities arrange by Buddhist temple and for funeral services”. Mr. Takeuchi was visibly concerned about succession issues of these traditional dishes as he is aware that the young generation are reluctant to spend time and efforts to learn the cuisines from elder generation. His solution “Building a public kitchen will allow the old and the young to sit down together, and to share ideas from both sides”.

## IWATE | Aboard the Disaster Learning Train



We commemorate ‘5 years after the Great East Japan Earthquake’, by a report from the disaster module field trip to Taro district in Iwate Prefecture conducted February 22nd-24th. The participants rode a Disaster Learning Train, a railway service that runs along the coast with a mission to impart learning from the Great East Japan

Earthquake experience. The participants learned that the area reconstruction plan was planned to last 5 years and has extended into 8 years due to planning delays. During this time there has been population outflow. The delay in finishing reconstruction is seen as a daily reminder of the disaster and maintains status of the region as a disaster area. The Taro district is now nicknamed “Tsunami Taro”. We also learned that Taro had a huge embankment, which was referred to as the “Great Wall”. Yet, following the earthquake

the district recorded 181deaths, despite the authorities issuing warnings that gave time to evacuate. Mr. Kobayashi, a trip participant observed that unresponsiveness to disaster warning for those who did not evacuate, despite having had been through evacuation drills, may have been due to the local people’s over confidence in the Great Wall. Even if one has experienced a disaster, human beings forget or the fear from the experience fades. It is importance to always have a sense of fear in face of a disaster.

## NAGASAKI | The rise and fall of the Kakure Kirishitan in Nagasaki

On February 5, 1597, 26 Catholics including Japanese Catechumens (three of whom were teenagers) were publicly tortured and crucified by the local landlord in Nagasaki. This was the culmination of two centuries of regional prosecutions against Catholic missionaries. To learn more, a group of IDS<sub>3</sub> faculties and students revisited the historical spot of martyrdom and held an informal seminar across the street where Glove Garden and Oura Catholic Church stand. They discussed what happened after to the remaining Catholics in Nagasaki. The story is: after the prohibition of Bible



teaching in Japan, Christian preaching activities went underground. Printed works written in plain language were reinterpreted backwardly, into Latin and Ancient Greeks, and were orally passed down between father and son. Secret worship groups, secularly called Kakure Kirishitan by the government, emerged around 17th century, and it continued to exist even

after the legalization of Christianity in Japan after World War II. Nowadays, Kakure Kirishitan is facing with the crisis of sustainability, in both tradition and culture preservation: the community has ceased to perform Christian teachings; prayers have lost connections with their ancestors; worshippers no longer able to comprehend old languages; and the community itself has been alienated and tagged as “cult religion” by the Catholic Church. By researching the Kakure Kirishitan’s heritages, we can shed new lights on the rediscovery and recognition of its tradition.





Professor Kaoru Izumi is a political scientist, Deputy Director of Center for Asia-Pacific Future Studies (CAFS), Kyushu University and Leader of Governance Module of IDS3. He is professor of Faculty of Law of Kyushu University and researches contemporary Korean politics, Japanese local government, and community building of border islands in Japan. We met Prof. Izumi at CAFS and he shared examples of “community building”. We asked a series of questions as shown below.

**Q** *If we see school as a community, is school different from a company, in terms of relationship?*

**A** In a company, you have a boss (a leader) and employees (subordinates). There exists a vertical relationship, which is often seen in Japanese companies. The boss uses power to deliver orders, give rewards and make punishments; the subordinates obey so as not to be fired. In a school, however, the situation is different. Even though we have a company-like structure, school children are not forced to do things: they work voluntarily under a supervisor's guidance and management.

**Q** *How do you define a community?*

**A** A community is as a society where interpersonal relationships are based upon values like democracy, equality and freedom. We use the word community, when we refer to a group of people who share equal rights and do things based on free will. Everyone in the community is committed to work on one or several goals and they are not subject to any

## INTERVIEW with Prof. Kaoru Izumi

# Global perspective on local community issues

authorities or unjust impositions. That is why we call the relationship among people in community democratic relationship.

**Q** *Is IDS3 a community?*

**A** In our program, we often discuss the principles of leadership. However, we cannot call IDS3 a community because we employ a hierarchical structure to make the system more efficient and we use a leading-subordinating relationship between faculties and students. Everyone in the program takes a partial role to share management responsibilities through team-work. You can see our faculty staff participate in tasks and do the same work as students do.

**Q** *Have you seen any differences between a community and a company, or a different type of organization?*

**A** As I mentioned before, the nature of private company and the nature of community are different. The goal for a company is to make as much profits as possible - that is why they are gathered together. Whereas, in a community, people act together, share the same purpose, and seldom give a thought about economic gain or loss. For the case in Tsushima, the Tsushima government purpose is to provide social services and make budgets for future expenditure. The government has the city mayor, legally elected, to represent all people. In a political sense, the government is “ruling” the people like a king ruling over its subjects. In contrast, the community does not have authorized power to “rule” its members: the relationship among individuals is much looser than that in a government.

**Q** *You mentioned politics in your arguments, how would you define a community in terms of politics?*

**A** Politics cannot exist without the involvement of politicians. The primary goal of politicians is to mobilize people to do things according to their intent. When in power, as party politics, politicians are leaders and peo-

ple are followers. However, in a community when one group of individuals use power or enforce law, their will, on others groups there is no such leader or political relationship.

**Q** *In your personal life, do you have any experience, or connections with local or global communities?*

**A** I am a member of FSL (Fukuoka Student scholar & Lawyer) for three years. It is a social network where members sit together and discuss social or political issues in Fukuoka. For example, we invited a candidate (for the upcoming Upper House election in July) to have a talk on election issues in Fukuoka, yesterday. I am not compelled to join in activities or to take duties, because this is voluntary work and we create self-imposed tasks.

At the end of the interview, Prof. Izumi emphasized two important points: **local solution can solve global problems** - local communities and city leaders know how to meet the needs of their residents and provide tools to meet common demands - we have to treat each major local problem as a global concern; **networks** - there are many issues and problems communities must face and deal with without support and resources - through networks and partnerships, a community has access to other communities that have had experienced and resolved similar issues. Information and communication technology (ICT) acts as a human network and can be considered as a new type of community. **Cooperation across national borders is necessary to solve global issues, Prof. Izumi concludes.**



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar. 13-19, Sumatra, Indonesia. **Paper and plantation problems, Environment module.**

Mar. 21-23, Ehime, Japan. **Diabetes and oral health, Health module.**

Mar. 21 & 24, Yame & Tsushima, Japan. **Community building, Governance module.**

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