The Center for Sustainable Development Studies at Toyo University (hereafter the Center) was started in 2001, and since then it has been engaging in research on topics that are crucial to international society. The original region of research was Asia, to which Africa has now been added. Having pursued such topics as realization of a sustainable society, support for endogenous development, and so on, we are presently pursuing a project on “Developing international contribution methods that are both localized for Asia and Africa and suitable for a globalized world” that engages in three research themes for the realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Every researcher joins one of the three themes of international contributions, sustainable business, or inclusive Africa. The researchers are engaged constantly in a variety of activities: They conduct local on-site workshops, carry out field research with externally acquired funding (Mitsui & Co. Environment Fund Research Subsidies) or other such support, hold open symposiums relating to the water business, and so on. We also hold an international symposium every year as an event involving the Center as a whole. Key figures are invited from overseas, support is obtained from foreign embassies and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the event is opened to the public. Details of these Center activities are reported in a newsletter issued for each event.

The Center is presently engaged in activities under the Strategic Research Base Development Program for Private Universities by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The final year of this program is fiscal year 2019, and for that and other reasons, the form our activities will take from fiscal year 2020 has not yet been decided. We are, however, proceeding with consideration of projects that would further develop our current activities. One priority item for consideration is the globalization of our area of activity. The Center has in the past made approaches not only in Asia but in areas where Toyo University did not provide the fullest research cooperation, including Africa (in Kenya, at Jomo Kenyatta University).
Director Hidetoshi Kitawaki visited the Universidade de São Paulo (University of São Paulo; USP), Brazil, from March 8 to 15, 2018. He was accompanied by Researcher Gaku Manago (March 10 to 17) and Visiting Researcher Akira Kaneko (March 8 to 15). The three met with USP administrators, formally signed a collaborative agreement with that institution and discussed matters related to its implementation. They requested that USP send a keynote speaker to address an international symposium to be hosted by the Center for Sustainable Development Studies in late November and invited USP to dispatch researchers to participate in joint projects. And they took this opportunity to call upon a number of organizations in Brazil and tour related facilities.

Kitawaki and Kaneko arrived at São Paulo’s Guarulhos International Airport on March 8, where they were met by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) officials. Together they toured an elderly care facility established in São Paulo with JICA assistance, where they were given an overview of facility activities together with an opportunity to see Youth Volunteers for Nikkei Community (NJV) in action.

On 9 March 9, the party paid on visit on the Consulado Geral do Japão em São Paulo – the Japan consulate – where they met the Consul General and his staff. They learned of various Japan-related events held in the area and of assorted opportunities for overseas study at USP. From there, the two proceeded to the USP main campus, visiting the International Cooperation Office to meet with administrative/academic staff and a program coordinator dispatched by Japanese universities. They also provided promotional/explanatory materials for distribution to interested students. This was followed by a call on JICA’s São Paulo Branch Office, where the director and staff provided much valuable information on the activities on volunteers within the Japanese-Brazilian community.

Researcher Manago joined the party on March 10. The party prepared for the coming week and, in addition, visited the Museum of Immigration of the State of São Paulo, the Museum of the Japanese Immigration and the Barrio Oriental (oriental street). They also visited the resource office of the Japan Foundation, there handing over publications and pamphlets for public display and distribution.

On March 12, the three toured the East campus of USP. This campus is notable for its new academic departments, most notably environmental studies, and for its contemporary buildings and structures. It is linked to the main campus by rail and holds out much promise for further development. Then, after a tour of the main campus, the party met with Associate Professor Tashiro Perez and other USP academic staff to exchange concrete suggestions on ways to foster collaboration between our two institutions. The main campus is spacious, pleasant and rich in greenery.
However, there are no dormitories for overseas students, who instead live in off-campus housing.

On March 13, the party met with USP Vice-President (International Cooperation) Raul Machado Neto at a conference room on the main USP campus. Vice-President Neto and Toyo University Vice President Kitawaki formally signed a collaborative agreement between the two institutions. In addition to presenting a general overview of Toyo University, Kitawaki discussed concrete collaborative initiatives, including a double degree program. He and his colleagues also spoke of their plan to invite two speakers from USP to talk at an international symposium to be hosted by the Center for Sustainable Development Studies on November 23, 2018. The party then visited the USP Center of Japanese Studies, there meeting with Director Kikuchi and other staff, who gave a general overview of center activities. The discussion then progressed to prospects for collaboration.

Finishing up their work in São Paulo, Kitawaki and Kaneko departed Brazil that day (March 13). After a changeover in Canada, they arrived in Japan on the evening of March 15.

Researcher Manago stayed behind for a couple of days to gather necessary materials. He boarded a plane for the United States on the night of March 15 and arrived in Japan on March 17.

These stays in São Paulo were short but nonetheless instructive. The University of São Paulo is large, comprised of many educational/research entities, and has a diverse student body. An opportunity to study within this milieu would certainly prove a significant, valuable experience for students. Brazil is a newly industrialized country, and São Paulo stands at its economic core. The city certainly has what it takes to provide overseas students with a good living and learning experience. There is also a vibrant Japanese-Brazilian community in the area, which in itself provides Japanese students with ample lessons in how to actively participate and flourish in the greater world. With regards to our symposium, which is still in the planning stages, this Brazilian connection will offer a new perspective for our work toward the attainment of SDGs (sustainable development goals).

1.Situation before the adoption of the Paris Agreement at COP21

This century is shaping up to be a period of growth under the limitations of the global environment. More than ever, human knowledge needs to be concentrated on environmental issues.

Meanwhile, population increase and economic growth of developing countries, including China and India, will inevitably cause an increase in global energy consumption. This situation urgently requires measures to shift to low-carbon energies and promote energy conservation.

As an international action to address global warming, COP15 adopted the Copenhagen Accord at the 2009 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Accord provides that the increase in global temperature should be below 2°C relative to the pre-industrial level. However, this long-term global target was to be implemented voluntarily by the parties, and the Accord had no legal binding.

But the 2015 UNFCCC COP21, held in Paris, France, accomplished a significant achievement by adopting an agreement explained as follows:

The Paris Agreement was formulated as a new framework for obliging all major greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting countries to mitigate their emissions. The
In February 2018, I conducted a field survey on support for people with intellectual disabilities and with developmental disabilities in the areas around the Sri Lankan cities of Colombo and Kurunegala. In the Colombo city area, I visited Sahan Sevana, a cookie factory of the Ceylon Biscuits Group’s division for employing people with disabilities, as well as visiting the homes of four factory employees. I also visited a Child Guidance Center, which looks after the care and education of children with intellectual disabilities and with developmental disabilities. At Kurunegala, I visited a day-care center for children with disabilities in Kulyapitiya and a vocational training school attached to the center.

From my visit to Sahan Sevana and visits to the homes of their employees, I found that people with disabilities who had started working at the cookie factory were able to have more self-confidence, were able to change from being someone in their family who depended upon other family members to being a person that other family members came to depend upon, as well as beginning to feel that would like to become independent. The HOPE cookies they make are becoming very well known in Sri Lanka and during their busy periods, they even have to give up their weekends to keep up with production.

The Child Guidance Center I visited was one of the four centers managed by the Sri Lankan government. It accepts children with intellectual or developmental disabilities including infants yet to reach their first birthday. The aim of the center is to enable children with disabilities to be able to continue on to kindergarten or school, or to special support schools. The criterion for this is that the children can sit quietly during class and listen to what the teacher is saying. The center has long been involved with Japan Overseas Cooperation Agreement is very significant in requiring all major GHG emitting countries, not only developed countries but also many emerging economic powers, such as China, India, Mexico and Brazil, to pursue domestic measures to achieve nationally determined contributions in terms of GHG mitigation, unlike the Kyoto Protocol. The Agreement also states that major GHG emitting countries shall voluntarily provide financial resources to assist developing countries in taking the necessary measures. The parties are legally obliged to take these actions by 2020, and evaluate the implementation of their measures every five years thereafter.

2. Implementation of the Paris Agreement, and the outlook

The Paris Agreement is significant for several reasons. 1) It not only aims to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C, but also pursues efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. 2) It has established a system for the parties to report and review their targets and actions every five years. 3) It is a comprehensive agreement that appropriately covers not only the responsibilities and roles of developed countries, but also the roles of developing countries in mitigating GHG emission, adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change, minimizing and addressing the loss and damage associated with such impacts, conducting technology transfers and capacity building, and providing financial resources. However, the Agreement does not legally oblige the parties to achieve the target itself, so the success of the Agreement will depend on each party’s voluntary measures. Nevertheless, the parties are obliged to take necessary actions and build a system for evaluating progress every five years, so the Agreement clearly shows the subsequent direction toward the creation of a low-carbon society. Given the expected growth in demand from various fields for policies and technological innovations for this purpose, the following event was held to lead the shift to low-carbon energies and the promotion of energy conservation.

3. WSED 2018

From March 1 to 3, 2018, I traveled to Wels, Austria to participate in the World Sustainable Energy Days (WSED) held at the city’s civic hall. I made a presentation titled “Trends in Energy Technologies in Japan,” and had discussions on the subject. I also gave review comments on studies in the biomass field presented in the Young Researchers Conference.

I exchanged views and had discussions on the direction and necessary measures for sustainable global development with local university instructors, officials from the EU Directorate-General for Energy, and others. European countries are striving to shift to low-carbon energies by holding this event, as a measure to steadily implement the Paris Agreement. I will further strive to share information about our center’s projects in this field with the world, and exchange information with other researchers.

Ryoko Shimano, Visiting Researcher
Maki Iwasaki, Visiting Researcher
“International Comparative Research on Religions and Immigrants: Islam and Christianity as Case Studies”

As a scholar of comparative religion and Middle Eastern Studies, I have been conducting field research on the coexistence of Muslims and Coptic Christians in Minya, one of the major cities in Upper Egypt. Coptic Christian is the largest religious minority of Egypt who consists of 10-15% of the whole population. In addition to this topic, religion and immigrants from Arab region in Europe and North America has been my new research topic. One of the reasons I started being interested in this topic is so-called “Arab Spring,” people’s revolution/uprising in Arab region. Having begun in Tunisia in January 2011, it has spread to many other Arab countries including Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen, etc, leading to the demise of dictatorships in some of these countries. “Arab Spring” has not only brought about major political, economic and social changes in the region but also caused a large number of emigrants and refugees to western countries and this phenomena is still continuing till now. Originally, Arab countries have a long history of migration to the West and today second and third generation of these migrants are playing active role in the host societies, and “Arab Spring” made this phenomenon more visible. In this new research topic, Coptic Egyptians who migrated to Canada and France are the primal concern.

Haruka Ono, Visiting researcher
“Research on Informal Urbanism in Africa and Asia”

As a student, I travelled to approximately 50 countries throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America. I encountered many towns without basic infrastructure services such as running water, sewerage, and electricity, where the people living in these kinds of places cooperated with one another and shared ingenious ways for everyday life. While working on my PhD I rented a room and lived in these kind of slum
areas or areas of informal urbanism, and through sharing everyday life with the people there, I tried to discover the rules that were created in relation to the people living in those kind of places. I thought that I may be able to find hints about the relation with urbanism and the way of life that we seem to have lost in our modern cities which all look the same and appear impersonal.

In cities and towns in developing countries in Africa and Asia, urbanism is proceeding outside the framework of urban planning. This kind of informal urbanism may seem disordered or unregulated but we now know that actually it is regulated by a kind of social order and a system develops that is in keeping with the local circumstances. I hope to derive ideas for urban planning rooted in the local community by positively clarifying the actual situation of informal urbanism and applying the community’s wisdom about urban living to urban planning.

Zhou Ke, Research Assistant

“Research into citizens’ awareness of the reduction and sorting of waste”

Since the 1990s the public’s consumption level has grown in China on the back of economic development, and urbanization has accelerated. This has led to a burgeoning urban population and a trend in which the volume of waste is rising year by year. However, China does not have an adequate number of facilities to deal with all this waste, and as the situation in the now frequently used phrase of “cities besieged by waste” suggests, environmental pollution, the excessive use of land resources and so on are serious environmental problems. Reducing waste emissions and encouraging the recycling of waste are becoming issues in China.

Relatively recently the Chinese government started to take a serious look at the processing of waste, and from the year 2000 experimental sorting and collection was introduced in the major urban centers of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. However, such exercises are virtually non-existent in any of the other smaller urban centers. Against this background, in order to investigate the severity of the waste problem in China and the degree of public concern about this issue, in November 2015 I conducted a pilot survey of the awareness of Chinese people living in China, using the WEBCHAT SNS service. According to the results of my survey, many respondents displayed an awareness of the waste problem but did not actually take any actions such as sorting their waste. In other words, in order to solve the waste problem public awareness will have to be heightened, and there is a need for some sort of measures to be taken towards action actually being taken by citizens.

The Center for Sustainable Development Studies took as an example the city of Changsha in Hunan Province, and conducted a questionnaire targeting Changsha’s citizens. The awareness of the waste problem among the citizens was ascertained, and an attempt made to elucidate the factors exerting an impact on the awareness of citizens. Hitherto research has implemented factor analyses of factors in behavior regarding reducing and sorting waste, but it has not been possible to go as far as building a determinant factor model for environment-conscious behavior. In future research, in line with theory of planned behavior the author will investigate and analyze the above-mentioned gap in Chinese citizens’ awareness and their non-action, and propose measures that link together the citizens’ awareness regarding waste reduction and sorting with environment-conscious behavior. Furthermore, the author will conduct a covariance structure analysis, a comparison with the previous Japanese and Chinese research, and consider the differences in the factors impacting goal intention. Furthermore, the author also intends to implement a study in Beijing, where waste sorting has been introduced, since sorting is not actually conducted in Changsha and it is not possible to determine whether or not the citizens sort their waste.

Reference

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