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Focus

Where Does China Come from, What Is It, and Where Is It Going ?

China was poor

The first time I visited China, the subject of my research, was in 1979, when I was only about twenty years old. This journey was the starting point of my strong attachment with the country, and the economic “poverty” of China made a strong impression on me. At that time, there were only a few hotels in Beijing where foreigners could stay, and most of the shops catering to foreign customers were known as “friendship stores.” Even the type of money that foreigners used was different from the money used by Chinese people. A young man who worked as a driver for the high-ranking military officers who took care of me during my time in China once whispered to me, “China is poor, don’t you think?” I still remember the self-deprecating look on his face as he said it.

China’s subsequent economic development is, of course, well known. Although income disparity in the country remains large, few people view China on the whole as a poor developing country anymore.

There is a reason for everything

“Many things happen in China that may be hard to believe from the Japanese perspective,” a friend who knows China well once said to me, “but there are reasons why one can’t simply discount such things.” One example is the “one-child policy,” which has caused suffering to many. From the point of view of western industrial countries, this policy may seem to disregard human rights and contradict their constitutions. In an example relevant to my field – energy and environmental issues – four years ago in winter the government of China forcibly put into place a policy by which coal usage was reduced, forcing several hundred thousand people to spend the winter without heat. If such a thing were to occur in Japan, the government would most likely lose power.

However, both of these policies have their reasons. The one-child policy was instituted to help the country emerge from poverty. The reduction in coal usage was part of the government’s air pollution countermeasures. Examining history, one may find that it was western industrial countries that disregarded the human rights of the Chinese people and plunged them into poverty. Such countries frequently criticize China for its “gluttonous consumption” and “mass production” of energy, resources, food, and indus-

trial goods that has been associated with increases in the Chinese population and economic growth, as well as the associated increase in emissions of pollutants. In other words, many of these criticisms are based on a double standard, somewhat akin to the Ryunosuke Akutagawa story “The Spider’s Thread.”



A photo in a toilet at the Beijing international airport entreats users to take steps against global warming

The significance of the fact that China has become wealthy

China’s transformation into a wealthy country has had a major global impact. Regarding environmental problems, for example, the Chinese government has banned the import of plastic garbage recently. All developing nations – not only China – were becoming “dumping grounds” for western industrial countries, and industries associated with high levels of pollution are being shifted to developing countries. The same phenomenon can be seen in the fact that in any society, the poorest people in the lowest social class do the dirtiest work in the dirtiest conditions. China rejected that role and became a “normal country”; as a result, western industrial countries are panicking because they can no longer export their garbage.

Similarly, regarding global warming, which is my research focus, quite a few governments are, in reality, not concerned so much about the Greenhouse gas emission, but seriously concerned about the high market share of the Chinese companies in the field of technologies that are considered to be countermeasures to global warming (such as solar panels, wind turbines, and nuclear power). Companies of the western industrial countries that are involved in these technologies are becoming less prominent in the global market which will have very negative economic con-

sequences for them.

The current Huawei problem may stem from the same root cause. The US and Japan's handling of this issue seems to be a double standard from the perspective of capitalism and the free market, which these two countries praise so highly. However it is interesting to see the US's serious resistance to allowing China to surpass it technologically, even if the US must break rules which they have admired to keep this from happening.

Dystopia

In this sense, China's "Belt and Road Initiative" is not an issue of good or bad; rather, since infrastructure is needed anywhere in the world and China is the only nation willing to fund infrastructure

construction, the initiative is a logical consequence. China is only doing what western industrial countries did in the past.

However, dystopian elements are increasing rapidly in modern Chinese society. Surveillance cameras are becoming increasingly common in public places, free expression is being regulated, the news is increasingly focused on what Xi Jinping is doing, personal data is digitally detected in seconds, and NGOs and lawyers involved in human rights issues are being arrested. Perhaps the business-as-usual scenario of the world as a whole is also undergoing similar changes. Although to reverse these world trend and to discuss profoundly about the democracy in China are beyond my capacity, as a researcher who should face up to the real world, I feel I must remain aware of their presences. **(Jusen Asuka)**

Recent Events

Transboundary Comparative Study on Mobility, Fluidity and Infrastructure

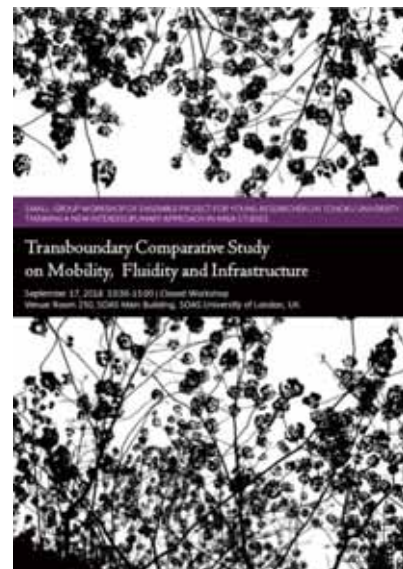
On September 17, 2018 a workshop entitled "Thinking a New Interdisciplinary Approach in Area Studies: Transboundary Comparative Study on Mobility, Fluidity and Infrastructure" was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (Photo 1). This workshop was held as part of the "Small-Group Workshop of Ensemble Project for Young Researchers in Tohoku University" as an adopted project of the Ensemble. At the workshop, young scholars of area studies, whose research is focused on a variety of regions, including Northeast Asia and Africa, gave presentations on their research on issues such as "migration," "change and fluidity," and "transnationalism" (Photo 2). The objective of the workshop was to search for a new methodology in area studies by sharing knowledge that has been garnered from a variety of disciplines and regions.

The field of area studies was first developed for the purpose of understanding various regions through applying academic research methods to ascertain characteristics unique to each region. This academic mission placed priority on regions that were difficult to visit and study due to linguistic, political, and geographic barriers. However, after the various structures and institutions in place during the Cold War broke down, many nations opted for greater freedom, which in turn led to the gradual loss of the privileges enjoyed by regional specialists. In addition, while at first, area studies employed academic research methods, increases in the amount of available information and data and the increasing possibilities to conduct detailed empirical research led to the increasing subdivision of each academic field. It became difficult to maintain interdisciplinary research networks even within the same area of study.

The presenters at this workshop shared this view of area studies. They exchanged ideas through their presentations about how the study of their various regions of focus can be amalgamated. As the "keywords" of the workshop were "migration, change/fluidity,

and transnationalism," it was very interesting to see how each researcher had a unique interpretation of the meanings of those terms. Sunaga, Suzuki, and Inoue all gave presentations that dealt with "transnationalism."

Sunaga and Suzuki both utilized research methods from cultural anthropology. Based on detailed interviews, they discussed the views of those involved in "transnationalism." Inoue, on the other hand, used a historiographical approach to demonstrate the significance of "transnationalism" within historical dynamism. Some presenters (Oishi and Tanaka) discussed the phenomenon of "migration" within regions, one presentation (Tamura) focused on the "migration" not only of people but also of things, and another (Naito) discussed movements related to "invisible" forms of power and authority. This variety gave us the opportunity to experience the way in which different perspectives can produce widely varying views of similar phenomena. In addition, through joint research on specific regions, we were able to gain a sense that it is possible to paint a multilayered and multifaceted picture of a given region. Conducting multidisciplinary research in regions that have been considered completely different has allowed us to share the ideas that we have developed in each region, which in turn has created new opportunities for increasing our knowledge. **(Hiroko Naito)**



Recent Events

Guardians of Rivers

On August 6, 2018, the 18th Joint Lecture Series sponsored by the Unit for the Collaborative Study of the Environment and Resources of Northeast Asia at the Center for Northeast Asian Studies and the China Environmental Problems Research Group was held at the Nihonbashi Lifescience Building. Mr. LIU Sheng, Director of the Chinese environmental NGO “Green Hunan,” was invited to participate in the lecture series. He spoke about the events leading up to the establishment of a private organization dedicated to solving the problem of environmental pollution, and he described the activities of the organization as well as its efforts towards network building.

Mr. Liu stated that Green Hunan is a Chinese environmental NGO that was established in 2011 mainly for the purpose of “working toward the protection of the ecology in Hunan Province and advocating a lifestyle whose purpose is protecting the valuable environment:”. The “River Guardian” program, which was launched in the same year Green Hunan was established, is the main project of the NGO. Volunteers who participate in the project used methods such as making daily observations of the environment at pre-established measurement points, surveilling the emission of pollutants by industry, and supervising the implementation of legal measures by government bureaus involved with environmental issues and the public release of environmental data by government agencies. Through these tasks, they worked toward solving the environmental pollution problem in the Xiangjiang basin and fulfilled their role as protectors of four river basin re-



gions in Hunan Province.

In his presentation, Mr. Liu also described the adoption of the “River Chief System” into the “River Guardian” project for the purpose of protecting the environment of the river basin. The River Chief System is a system through which “River Chiefs” (people responsible for river basins) are appointed at four levels (province, city, county, and township), whose main tasks are protecting water resources, preventing and managing water pollution, improving the water environment, and restoring the water ecology. This creates a river and lake management and protection system that ensures that the system’s cooperative, supervisory, and management capabilities are fully effective. At the end of 2016, the General Office of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of the People’s Republic of China announced the “Intent to Fully Promote the River Chief System,” and by the end of June 2018, they had given clearance for all 31 Provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) around the country to establish River Chief Systems. Mr. Liu pointed out that with the development of the River Chief System, the environmental protection activities of Green Hunan had developed to the point at which private individuals had taken on the role of River Chiefs.

He also explained that in addition to accomplishing the River Chief System, Green Hunan also aimed to create a network of volunteers for each river. However, Mr. Liu pointed out that the efforts of a single environmental NGO were insufficient to promote the participation of such a large number of people, so the cooperation of government organizations, schools, research institutes, and private industry was essential. Thus, we are witnessing an important turning point in the history of the Chinese environmental protection movement as it seeks the participation of people around the country. **(Dan JIN)**

Recent Events

The Date City Institute of Funkawan Culture (Hokkaido) and the Center for Northeast Asian Studies Hold an Annual Lectures Series to Utilize the Results of Research in the Field of Regional Studies

Natural disasters and societal development can be conceived of as two sides of the same coin. Disasters that occur in densely populated areas result in large numbers of victims, and at times, they hinder the development and growth of the local society. Thus, in such areas, regional groups and communities must overcome disasters over many years.

Concretely, for example, the frequency with which major earthquakes (with a minimum of 1,000 victims) occur in Japan – which has suffered a great deal of damage over the years due to such disasters – has been half a century from the Fukui Earthquake in 1948, shortly after the end of the Pacific War, to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995. However, this does not mean that such disasters occur only once every 50 years. Prior to the Fukui Earthquake, earthquakes causing significant damage occurred over four consecutive years before and after the war (the Tottori Earthquake of 1943, the Tonankai Earthquake of 1944, the Mi-

kawa Earthquake of 1945, and the Nankai Earthquake of 1946). The period of postwar high economic growth in Japan may have partially been a result of this fifty-year period.

However, this data cannot be used for the purpose of the development and growth of society. Major, destructive earthquakes happen at random. Terms such as “dormant” and “active” cannot be used in seismicity; the reasons for the quiescence and frequent occurrence of earthquakes have not yet been established. Thus, the use of terms “dormant” and “active” is extremely dangerous, as these peri-



ods are completely random. No one can know when and where an earthquake will occur; our society must be able to prepare for and deal with disasters that occur out of the blue.

On October 26 of last year, the Date Rekishi-no-Mori Culture Center in the city of Date held the 9th Academic Collaborative Exchange Lecture Series. This event emphasized the importance of preparing for and dealing with natural disasters. The event's success was enabled by a co-sponsorship from the Date City Institute of Funkawan Culture and the Center for Northeast Asian Studies as well as the combined cultural and scientific perspective of the lectures. Yu Fukuda explored how contemporary society overcomes hardships through a discussion of his survey of memorial services held in the wake of disasters. Disasters have a major impact on society, and people overcome such events in a variety of ways depending upon the history, culture, religion of the region. Thus, an understanding of areas that have experienced disasters can help us consider what kind of society we should build in the future. In another lecture, Naoto Hirano described the causes of major earthquakes and volcanic activity and discussed how the

crustal movements and natural disasters occur in each region faces, based on observations of deep sea floor in the Pacific Ocean and the sinking Pacific Plate conducted by submersible vessels, which is a cause of major earthquakes.

The two lecturers, who discussed “The Sociology of Memorial Services after Disasters” and “Recovering Rock Samples from the Deep Sea Floor,” may seem at first glance to have little in common in terms of their fields of study and the details of their research, but in fact, they both delivered powerful messages to everyone who heard their lectures. The audience members learned that making preparations based on a knowledge of the causes and mechanisms behind natural disasters and knowing how our ancestors handled the aftermath of natural disasters as a society can help us prepare and handle disasters today. The fact that the audience members asked a large number of questions in rapid succession underscored their interest in the subject matter and the importance of the lectures. I would like to offer my thanks to all those who participated in the administration of the lecture series. (Naoto Hirano)

Recent Events

The Origin and Evolution of Life: Global Change in the Past and Near Future

On Saturday, February 23, 2019, Professor Shigenori Maruyama delivered a public lecture, entitled ‘The Origin and Evolution of Life: Global Change in the Past and Near Future’, in conference room at the Tokyo Electron Hall Miyagi. The lecture was endorsed by the Geological Society of Japan, the Tohoku University Museum, and the Japan Geochronology Network (iGnet). After CNEAS’s Director Hiroki Takakura described the objectives of the lecture series, I (Tatsuki Tsujimori) provided the audience with a brief profile of the invited speaker. Professor Maruyama was born in 1949 in Tokushima Prefecture. He obtained his Ph.D. in from Nagoya University in 1980. Subsequently, he served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Toyama, a visiting researcher at Stanford University, an Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo, and a Professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. He currently serves as a Specially Appointed Professor at Tokyo Institute of Technology. He is engaged in multidisciplinary research in fields such as geological science, planetary science, Earth’s history, and the origin and evolution of life. Professor Maruyama’s scholarly accomplishments have received several honors, including Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2000, the Purple Ribbon Medal in 2006, and Honorary Fellow of the Geological Society of America in 2014 (only the fourth Japanese person to achieve this honor). In addition, his scientific papers have been cited in excess of 16,300 times (according to a Scopus survey in May 2019). He has made major contributions to the training and education of future generations of researchers, while at the same time proposing exciting hypotheses and new models that reflect his unique way of deep thinking. His public lecture was related to my international workshop ‘Continental Amalgamation and Stabilization of Northeast Asia: Stories before the Stone Age’, sponsored by the Tohoku Forum for Creativity (TFC), Organization for Research Promotion, Tohoku University; the workshop was one of four planned under the Thematic Pro-

gram ‘Geologic Stabilization and Human Adaptations in Northeast Asia’ by Professor Hiroki Takakura and others. Professor Maruyama was one of the keynote speakers in the workshop.



In a fully packed conference room, he started to speak powerfully in response to the key question “Are the any kinds of life that existed soon after the formation of the Earth still being born in present-day Earth?” and then engaged in a discussion with the audience based on five simple questions. His passionate lecture spanned a wide range of topics including cutting-edge research on the evolution of life on the Earth, the origin and evolution of humans from both a biological perspective and through a discussion of the history of civilization, and the near future of global civilization. Over 200 people enjoyed his open-minded responses to the questions, and they listened intently to his lively lecture. His enthusiasm for research and education as well as his personal uniqueness were on full display in this setting.

After his lecture had concluded, some audiences lined up to ask him questions individually. In response to a junior high school student who asked, “What can I do to help save the Earth (from the perspective of environmental issues)?”, Professor Maruyama replied, “Study as hard as you can and become a scientist.” This response left a strong impression to me. After leaving the venue, Professor Maruyama went to a café on Jozenji-dori Avenue with me and several students. As I watched Professor Maruyama give advice on the students’ research topics and interests, I thought of the first time I met Professor Maruyama 25 years ago, and I felt a renewed sense of resolve to put even more effort into research and education. (Tatsuki Tsujimori)

Awards

Paper co-authored by Assistant Professor Atsushi Ishii awarded the 2017 Sustainability Science Best Paper Award

I was a co-author of the paper Sugiyama, M., Asayama, S., Koguchi, T., Ishii, A., Emori, S., Adachi, J., ... Yoshizawa, G. (2016). Transdisciplinary co-design of scientific research agendas: 40 research questions for socially relevant climate engineering research, which was awarded the Sustainability Science Journal's 2017 Sustainability Science Best Paper Award for "most outstanding paper." Recently, transdisciplinary science is promoted to create novel knowledge through co-production (co-design, cooperation, co-evaluation) between stakeholders and scientists and thereby to enable the development of a sustainable society. The award-winning paper is the result of a co-designing exercise by stakeholders and researchers, who jointly identified research questions regarding climate engineering techniques involving large-scale modifications to mitigate climate change. This was the first attempt in Japan to produce a peer-reviewed paper in which all those who participated in the transdisciplinary co-design were listed as co-authors.

Here, the term "co-design" does not refer to simply engaging in a debate in order to identify research questions. The stakeholders have diverse sets of values. It was necessary to select research questions that respected the values held by all stakeholders, some of whom were in favor of climate engineering, and some of whom were against it. Therefore, the core team (in addition to myself, this team also included Masahiro Sugiyama of the University of Tokyo, Shinichiro Asayama of Waseda University, Takanobu Koguchi of Ritsumei University, and Seita Emori of the National Institute for Environmental Studies) decided to take a neutral stand that made clear that our research was not in support of or against the use of climate engineering. One of the innovations of this paper was the fact that it utilized a format in which votes were cast on each research question and research questions that received at least a single "yes" vote were retained. This was the method we used to ensure that the research questions selected would reflect all of the diverse values held by the various participants. In Japan, a majority vote is, in an extremely high number of cases, considered to be the "imposition of the majority." In contrast, our method has the merit of ensuring that the views of actors who are not very good at debating are also reflected in the results.

In conclusion, our paper received this award due to the cooperation of all participants and to Professor Sugiyama's efforts in taking on a leadership role in the core team, a role he does not often assume. I would like to note the contributions of and offer my thanks to all the participants in this study.

(Atsushi Ishii)



Toshikazu Tanaka (Research Fellow) is the recipient of the 24th Japan Association for Nilo-Ethiopian Studies Takashima Award

On Sunday, April 22, 2018, the 24th Takashima Award was awarded at the 27th Japan Association for Nilo-Ethiopian Studies Conference, which was held at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. The Takashima Award is presented to full members under the age of 35 who are engaged in exceptional research and cooperative activities in the region covered by the Association. The award-winning research this year was "Practical Research Activities on the Production and Dispersion of Jika-tabi (rubber-soled footwear with the big toe separated) to Protect the Feet of Farmers in Woliso, Ethiopia." At the award ceremony, I was deeply honored to be presented with the certificate by Professor Masayoshi Shigeta of Kyoto University, who is the Association President, and who provided me with guidance.



I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Hiroki Takakura of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies for providing me with a suitable environment in which to conduct my practical research. I am happy to have received the same award that so many of the researchers who came before me and whom I deeply respect also received, and at the same time, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the professors who recommended me, and who were engaged in the judging of this award. However, the happiness I feel is not mine alone. I would like to mention the people of the farming village of Woliso in Ethiopia, where I have been conducting a fieldwork of the use of oxen in farming since 2007, President Shigehiko Fujiki and all the employees at Marugo Company Inc. in Okayama, who cooperated in my research, and Mr. Kebere, who made the jika-tabi on-site in Ethiopia in the city of Woliso.

While I was hesitant to accept this award, as my research is still on-going, it is a great source of encouragement to me to know that my efforts have been recognized in this way. Needless to say, I plan to put my efforts into furthering my practical research into the production and dispersion of jika-tabi that are manufactured in the field. I am sure that this award will serve as a source of confidence when I face the countless difficulties that await me in the future. My collaborators and I will continue to face new challenges as we develop our research. I look forward to further guidance and encouragement as we move forward.

(Toshikazu Tanaka)

New Staffs and Visiting Scholars

Visiting Scholar

Islamov Bakhtiyor

Professor of the "International Economics & Foreign Trade", Tashkent Branch of the Russian Economic University (REU) after G.V. Plekhanov.
2018.8-2018.10
Economics



Assistant Professor

Hiroyuki Fujikata

2018.10.1-present
Japanese Early Modern History



Research Fellow

Hiroaki Yaguchi

2018.8-present
History of International Relationships



Visiting Scholar

Aldo Tollini

Professor, Ca' Foscari University, the faculty of Asian and Mediterranean African Studies
2018.7-8
Medieval Japanese Literature, Education
Theory of Japanese Language Teaching



Visiting Scholar

Igor Sharygin

Laboratory Head, Institute of the Earth's Crust of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences
2018.5-7
Geology



Visiting Scholar

Munkhtseren Zolzaya

Lecturer, Mongolian Business University
2018.12-2019.3
History of Mongolian Ethics



Professor

Katsuhiro Sano

2019.4-present
Prehistoric Archaeology



Assistant Professor

Teiji Nomoto

2019.4-present
Japanese History, Political History



Research Fellow

Kaori Horiuchi

2019.4.1-present
Mongolian History



Assistant Professor

Dan Jin

2019.4-present
Environmental Economics



Research Fellow

Daishi Yamazaki

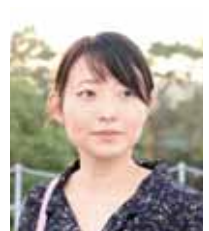
2019.4.1-present
Evolutionary Ecology



Research Fellow

Runa Inoue

2019.4.1-present
Japanese Art History



Visiting Scholar

Florian Stammler

Professor, University of Lapland
2019.1-3
Social Anthropology



Publications

The language of the following books is basically in Japanese except showing the other language.

Northeast Asian Monograph Series

Masahiro Tomoda, eds., *Japan and the World around the Meiji Restoration: Experience of Diplomacy and Mutual Understanding*, Tokyo:Yoshikawa Kobunkan Inc., February 2019.

How did powerful countries of Western Europe and Japan recognize each other at the end of Edo period? This book considers how both sides of recognition were created and how they confronted each other from the perspectives of ideology, culture, and customs.



House Archives, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University Series No.64, December 2018.

Takiguchi Ryo eds, *Urbanization and Traditional Dwellings in Contemporary Mongolia: Housing Management and Home Construction in Ger Area, Ulaanbaatar*, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University Series No. 65, December 2018.

CNEAS Reports

Hiroki Takakura et al. eds., *Permafrost and Culture: Global Warming and Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Russian Federation (in Russian)*, October 2019.

Researcher's Initiative Publications

Kenichiro Aratake, ed, *Poverty and Medical Care in Early Modern Japan*, Tokyo: Kokon-shoin Publishing, February 2019.

Yuichi Sekiya & Hiroki Takakura, eds, *The Public Anthropology of Disaster Recovery: Cooperation Between Fukushima Nuclear Disaster Victims and Tsunami Victims*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, January 2019.



Masayuki Tanimoto and R.Bin Wong, eds, *Public Goods Provision in the Early Modern Economy: Comparative Perspectives from Japan, China, and Europe*, California: University of California Press, January 2019.

Susan Bouterey and Lawrence E.Marceau, eds, *Crisis and Disaster in Japan and New Zealand: Actors, Victims and Ramification*, Palgrave Macmillan, November 2018.

Northeast Asian Books

Kenichiro Aratake and Yoichi Takahashi, eds., *Documents of the Edo-Period Priests of Shiogama Shrine*, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University Series No. 66, February 2019



Northeast Asian Studies

Northeast Asian Studies is a periodical academic journal for the purpose of contributing to the development of area studies and its related fields in Northeast Asia. Northeast Asian Studies, February 2019.

CNEAS Monograph Series

Research results of CNEAS joint research projects, and individual projects, irregular publication (in house publications)

Masahiro Tomoda, Yuko Kikuchi and Sakari Takahashi, eds., *The Immigration of the Lord of Iwadeyama-Date and his Ex-Vassals to and Their Cultivation of Hokkaido: Reading the Agatsuma*

Letters

Munkhtseren ZOLZAYA, MSUAC, ass. Professor, Dr.
Mongolian State University of Arts and Culture

I am very pleased with the best academic environment

My research area is the history of Mongolian ethics and business ethics, a field of applied ethics. In the past few years, I attempted to use sociological methods in researching of the most relevant ethical issues in Mongolian society. During the research process, I posited that many Mongolian businessmen must learn business ethics from developed countries; the advantages that these countries have in regard to business ethics will be help change the tendency of business ethics in our own country.

I worked as a visiting scholar in the Center for Northeast Asian Studies of Tohoku University from December 2018 to March 2019. It was snowing when I arrived in Sendai city. Mongolians have a saying—when someone arrives to a region during a precipitation, that will be the luckiest person.

The CNEAS of Tohoku University conducts research on natural and social sciences, and engages in collaborative work with the foremost researchers. Research projects led by the CNEAS are increasingly significant for the world's fundamental problems, greatly contributing to global challenges (for example, its study on disasters and local cultural heritage.) Further, the Center is engaged with Mongolian studies in Northeast Japan, where Professor Oka Hiroki lays the groundwork for new generations of Mongolists. Today, Mongolists are focusing



on contemporary Mongolian social problems. My current research is related to this sphere.

Host researcher Masachika Shiotani and I had a face-to-face interview with the directors of the company in Sendai, which was a fruitful and successful experience. We plan to continue the collaborative research that we started in Japan. I learned various things and a positive attitude from his many years of experience,

as well as acquiring good communication skills.

It was my pleasure being invited to the CNEAS. I thank researcher Masachika Shiotani for help and advice during this research. I am also grateful to Director Takakura of the CNEAS, Professor Oka Hiroki and the PhD students for their friendly assistance. I am pleased to know that all staff of the CNEAS respect and promote an academic-centric organizational culture.

Letters

Assistant Professor Kennet E. Flores

The Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

Spatio-temporal distribution of circum-Pacific high-pressure metamorphic rocks

I am an assistant professor at the Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and research associate at the American Museum of Natural History. I am a regional field geologist specializing in petrology and tectonics. I study accreted oceanic crust, exhumed high pressure–low-temperature rocks (e.g. eclogites, blueschists, jadeitites), and obducted ophiolites, in order to understand the evolution and processes operating in convergent margins. Japanese scientist and research projects on these types of rocks in Japan has significantly impacted the understanding of these type of plate boundary and plate tectonic evolution. Thus, visiting and working on Japan was a longtime dream of mine.

This summer I had the honor to visit and work at the Center for Northeast Asian Studies (CNEAS) of Tōhoku University for three months, as a foreign visiting researcher. During this time I worked along CNEAS and Tōhoku University staff and students on local (Guatemala, California, Japan) and global (the circum-Pacific) research projects. The results of this projects shed light upon important processes such as trace elements recycling between crust and mantle, elements distribution on metamorphic minerals, exhumation of high-pressure rocks, the large-scale tectonic implications and its role on shaping the continental margins.

I also had the opportunity to carry out fieldwork on the iconic Sambagawa metamorphic belt as well as the Renge and Motai belts. Finally, during this visit, Prof. Tsujimori and I, alongside colleagues from the USA, we co-organized the main session about metamorphic rocks for the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting 2019. This session titled “Frontiers of Subduction Zone and Regional Metamorphism: Fluids, Reactions, and Dynamics” obtained more than 55 contributions with results from more than 20 complexes around the planet as well as cutting edge modelling and process oriented findings. Certainly, this session at AGU fall meeting will be an important contribution for our community and will put Tōhoku University on the forefront of this field of the geosciences.



In closing, I would like to thank the CNEAS and Tōhoku University for an outstanding and inspiring summer, definitively an experience of a lifetime.

Editorial

Editorial postscript:

We are sending you the seventh volume of the CNEAS Bulletin. Through the Bulletin, we would like to inform you of the activities of CNEAS for 2019. For this issue, we received letters from Dr. Munkhtseren Zolzaya (Associate Professor at Mongolian State University of Arts and Culture) and Dr. Kennet E. Flores (Assistant professor at The Brooklyn College of the City University of New York). We are glad to have communication from them with updates on their present situations.

In 2019, the world’s attention was riveted to Northeast Asia. With on-going protests in Hong Kong, nuclear escalation in North Korea, Japanese recognition of the Ainu people, and Russian moves to develop its Far East, one could not look away. Meanwhile, South Korea’s entry *Parasite* won the Palme d’Or at Cannes, and the Mongolian rock band The Hu conquered the world with over 60 million views on YouTube. 2020 will prove to be another interesting year for scholars of Northeast Asian studies.

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The Bulletin promotes a continuing exchange of information with

former visiting scholars and others who related to the Northeast Asian Studies.

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