Message from the Director

Warm greetings from a very chilly Japan. All the best to the MPE family in 2018!

This October we welcomed five new students for the PPT program and three for the ILP. Despite the unusually cold weather and two heavy snowstorms, they have all adjusted well to life here in Japan.

We are looking forward to an exciting and informative Field Trip to Nagoya (the fourth largest city after Osaka which is number 3 and Yokohama is number 2!) in mid-February. We will see the world-famous Toyota factory with its efficient `just-in-time` inventory system and visit Yokkaichi, a nearby city which was home to Japan`s first petrochemical complex and which suffered from terrible air and water pollution in the 1960s and early 1970s. This was one of Japan`s `top 4` worst environmental disasters. We will learn how that city of little over 300,000 people recovered became a model for `greener` living. If we are lucky, we should be able to squeeze in a quick tour of Nagoya Castle.

Aside from our core coursework and invaluable NTA internship, we have a series of interesting and broad ranging Special Topics Lectures lined up for 2018. We kicked off the year with a talk by a renowned Energy Economist, Prof. Youngho Chang from Singapore, and we have several more interesting STLs lined up.

While our second years are busy hitting the keyboard and crunching numbers for their master`s theses, our first years are wrapping up their heavy load of Fall courses which will build the foundation for their next one and half years at YNU.

To our alumni around the world, we wish you all peace and prosperity in 2018. Please send us an email or post on FB. Let us know how you are doing. And, of course, tell your junior colleagues about our Program!

Sincerely,

Craig Parsons
MPE Director
When Japan had entered upon a new modernization era, the Meiji period, they started pursuing a policy of promoting the global trade and modern industry. The new government began trading officially with the West and within less than a decade, raw silk was Japan’s number one export product. As one of the industrial policy in the early modernization of Japan, it was decided to introduce the latest technology, employ foreign technical advisers, and train Japanese women as mill hands to raise the level of locally spun silk to meet the world’s demand.

In 1870, the government commissioned a young French engineer, Paul Brunat, to establish the first industrial spinning mill on the Japanese soil. He then helped the establishment of the most famous Meiji government’s model factories, the silk-reeling plant, at Tomioka (in the Gunma prefecture, north of Tokyo). The Tomioka Silk Mill, finally stopped operating as a silk-reeling plant in 1987, still stands in its original condition. The buildings have been well preserved and were categorized as National Historic Site.

I was fortunate to be part of the MPE field trip to Tomioka Silk Mill and Kawagoe, on Friday, July 14, 2017. This field trip is a wonderful experience for the MPE’s students to learn about the long history of Japan’s silk industry as one of the pioneer’s industry during early modernization era. We also were able to visit the historical buildings that were designated as the National Treasures, such as cocoon warehouse and silk-reeling plant.
Tomioka Silk Mill

In Gunma Prefecture, the silk industry has been flourishing since the old days and there are a lot of heritage sites related to silk-reeling plants. Tomioka was chosen as the location of the first mill complex to introduce the Western-designed silk-reeling plant in Japan for the following reasons:

- The area around Tomioka could produce sufficient quantities of cocoons for producing raw silk;
- There was a ready supply of fresh water from a nearby river, which is necessary for producing raw silk;
- Coal to power steam engines was available close to Tomioka city.

Tomioka Silk Mill is a model of a massive silk-reeling factory built by the government. It had 300 silk-reeling machines and could produce up to 64 tons of raw silk a year in its heyday. This mill complex contributed to the mass production of high-quality raw silk continuously for more than one hundred years. It’s also a set of heritage sites showing technological innovations between Japan and the world in the field of silk industry from the late 19th century. This technology developed in Japan made silk available to the public and enriched the lifestyles and culture of people around the world.

Currently, Tomioka Silk Mill is owned, preserved, repaired, maintained and managed by Tomioka City. It is open to the public with the purpose to tell the history of Tomioka Silk Mill, share its value as cultural property, and to have an awareness of the significance in passing down this important heritage to later generations.

Kawagoe City Tour

After visiting the Tomioka Silk Mill, the group took a sightseeing tour around the Koedo Kawagoe. Koedo Kawagoe is an Edo-period castle town, known for its old clay warehouses and merchant homes, located in Saitama prefecture. Kawagoe showcases the architecture of the Edo period, as one of the important Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings in Japan. In Kawagoe, we can experience the traditional and pure Japan by visiting the famous Toki-no-kane (Bell Tower), learn about historical heritage and enjoy the Japanese food at an authentic Japanese restaurant.

Therefore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the World Bank for sponsoring this field trip. Lastly, I would also like to express my appreciation for the effort, time and dedication of the MPE team (Professor Craig Parsons and team) that made it such a wonderful and memorable field trip.
Student News

Congratulations to the Graduates of 2017!

On August 8, 2017, a total of seven students from four countries presented their theses and received their diplomas. These students graduated from two separate programs: five students from the World Bank and two students from the Indonesia Linkage Master Program (ILP).

The students received congratulatory speeches from Professor Hiroyuki Izumi, Dean of the Graduate School of International Social Sciences, Mr. Koichi Omori, Senior Communications Officer at the World Bank, Professor Hiroyuki Inoue, Research Department at National Tax College, Professor Hiroyasu Uemura and Professor Craig Parsons. The speeches celebrated the pertinence of and variety in the students’ research papers and spoke to the lifelong friendships that were made at YNU. Professor Yasushi Nakamura, Chair of the Department of Economics, encouraged the graduates to visit YNU the next time they return to Japan and to play an active role as a bridge between Japan and their home countries.

We hope to see you all again soon!
List of the Graduates and their Thesis Titles

PPT Cohort 17: Joint Japan/World Bank Scholarship Graduates

Arief Syahriza from Indonesia, *Regional Economic Development of Indonesia During the Decentralization Era (2009-2015): Growth, Inequality and the Impact of Infrastructure and Industrial Agglomeration*

Sokha Sangvat from Cambodia, *The Impact of Microfinance on Economic Growth in Cambodia: A Panel Data Approach*

Japhet Chiradza from Zimbabwe, *An Analysis of the Impact of Targeted Economic Sanctions on Bilateral Trade in Pre-Crisis and Post-Crisis Periods: The Case of Zimbabwe*

Fakhri Ahadi from Indonesia, *The Role of the Mining Sector in the Indonesian Economy: An Input-Output Analysis Approach*

Munkhtuul Lkhagvasuren from Mongolia, *The Improvement of Real Property Taxation of Mongolia*

Indonesia Linkage Program (ILP) Graduates

Era Hani Medisa. *Estimation of Indonesian Price Elasticity of Electricity Demand, 2009-2015*

Karina Dianingsari. *The Impact of Government Size on Regional Economic Growth in Indonesia: Testing the Non-Linear Hypothesis*
Welcome to our New Students!

We are pleased to welcome five new World Bank Scholarship students from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Malawi, Malaysia and Nepal to Yokohama National University. We are also delighted to welcome three new Indonesia Linkage Program students, who are part of the third cohort of the program since its return to YNU. We hope you are enjoying your studies and life here in Japan!

Joint Japan/World Bank Scholarship Students

Akalu Kibret Hailu. Tax Auditor, Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority
Ariful Hoque. Second Secretary, Legal Enforcement, National Board of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh
Symon Mkandawire. Domestic Taxes Officer, Malawi Revenue Authority
Safilidin Muhamad Ramli. Executive Officer, Assessment of Tax-Permanent, Inland Revenue Board, Malaysia
Teeka Upadhyaya. Tax Officer, Taxpayer Service Office, Kalimati, Government of Nepal

Indonesian Linkage Program (ILP) Students

Nani Zara. Staff, Staffing and Human Resource Development Agency, Depok, Indonesia
Nia Dianti. Human Resource Analyst, Yogyakarta City Government (Sub Unit: Taman Pintar Science Center), Indonesia
Raymond Rayendra Elven. Staff, Kepulauan Riau Provincial Government, Tanjungpinang, Indonesia
The New Students Meet President Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank

On December 14, 2017, the new students met President Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank during a forum in Tokyo. Below are some comments from one of the new students, Mr. Akalu Kibret Hailu from Ethiopia, about this extraordinary and exciting opportunity.

For some people, what I’m saying right now may not be a big deal. But, I think for many others, like me, who grew up in a very small village, meeting those people in a higher position, I say in the higher position!! is like simply “a great prize for minor achievement”. At the time, when we had a hand shake with them we naturally realized how far we traveled and were encouraged to work hard. Dear all, do you believe me if I told you that I have met and spoke with one of those people in the world? President Jim Yong Kim-the President of the World Bank? Most of my childhood friends did not believe me until they saw the photo you saw to the right.

Through the vital arrangement process the MPE office finally enabled us to attend “health for all forum” which was held from December 12-15-2017 at Prince Hotel. On the same date, as I said earlier we all-Public Policy and Taxation students (as a group) were able to meet President Jim Yong Kim. I was very excited and consider myself as a lucky guy. I think it is easy to guess that President Kim may not remember the moment and even the photo that we had together. But the important point is how we interpret this situation for ourselves. It extremely inspired me to dream more than what I have and to think more globally.

Ohh…. let me continue. We arrived the place just few minutes late. But the president had not begun to give his talk. Prior to the President, the current World Health Organization (WHO) director, Ethiopian Dr. Tewodros Adhanom were making speeches. Wow! Again, I feel this was best experience of my life. It’s not only because I’m also from Ethiopia but I didn’t expect such a surprise. All I said to myself was, ”Today is my day.” Next, the World Bank President went out to the stage and started his speech. To be honest, I did not listen well since I was thinking more about my closeness with those great persons.

Sometimes words may not describe our feelings especially when those incidents passed. What I remember is that I spent couples of minutes watching these two significant persons and then I humbly expressed my deepest gratitude for JJ/WBGSP PPT program. Finally, I want to say thanks to the MPE office for coordinating such important programs for our academic and personal development and I hope we will make you proud by being a person that you want us to be. “በጣም ከመስጠን።” means (Thanks, a lot) in my local language.

By Akalu Kibret Hailu
Cohort 19
Department News

Changes in MPE Office staff

Kiyosawa-san left the MPE Office in October 2017 as her 3 year employment contract with Yokohama National University ended. She will be missed at the MPE Office! She was a charming lady, did the job carefully, and we all will miss her very much. Wishing Kiyosawa-san all the best!

2017-2018 PPT Committee Members

Professor Craig Parsons, Director
Professor Hiroyasu Uemura
Professor Jun-ichi Okabe
Associate Professor Nozomu Muto
Associate Professor Xinyuan Zhang
Assistant Professor Keiko Ishiwata

Contact

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