



The East Asia Local and
Regional Government Congress

Organized by Nara Prefecture

Supported by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

The 7th East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress Report

The 7th

East Asia

Local and Regional Government Congress

Report

2016.11/6 Sun ▶ 8 Tue

The 7th East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress

The 7th East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress

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※The titles listed are those as of the time of the congress.



Overview of the 7th East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress

2016

● **November 6** (Sun) ————— Hotel Nikko Nara • Nara Royal Hotel

14 : 00 — 17 : 30	Bilateral Meeting
19 : 00 — 20 : 30	Welcome Reception

2016

● **November 7** (Mon) ————— Hotel Nikko Nara

08 : 30 — 08 : 45	Orientation
08 : 45 — 12 : 00	Working-level Discussion (Case Introduction)
12 : 00 — 13 : 00	Lunch (1)
13 : 00 — 13 : 20	Opening Ceremony
13 : 20 — 13 : 50	Keynote Speech
13 : 50 — 14 : 20	Briefing on Session Meeting etc.
14 : 30 — 17 : 10	Head-level Discussion
17 : 10 — 17 : 40	General Session
17 : 40 — 18 : 00	Commemorative Photo Session
18 : 10 — 18 : 45	Representatives' Press Conference
19 : 00 — 21 : 00	Governor's Banquet

2016

● **November 8** (Tue) ————— Hotel Nikko Nara

09 : 00 — 12 : 00	Excursion (Nara National Museum, Mount Wakakusa)
12 : 00 — 13 : 00	Lunch (2)

Greetings



ARAI, Shogo Governor of Nara Prefecture

This is the 7th East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress where local and regional governments in East Asian countries gather here in Nara.

This Congress is held to mutually learn how each local and regional government tackles various issues with their own inventive and ingenious ideas and exchange opinions. I believe it has been helpful.

I am very grateful that we could hold the seventh meeting here today all because of your understanding and cooperation. I would like you to take this opportunity to establish cordial relationships with other local and regional government officials and make it the beginning of your regional development.

Although the themes may vary slightly depending on the conference, regional development, aging population, social security, tourism, and agriculture are common issues among local and regional governments in East Asian countries. Today, we picked three themes: “Community and Regional Development”, “Agriculture and Regional Economic Development” and “Promotion of Measures against Declining Birthrates”. It would be my greatest pleasure if you could share your views about advanced projects and issues in your areas to solve these problems to make this conference a meaningful one.

Relish the beautiful autumn season here in Nara as the splendid weather welcomes you. I heartily welcome your visit and I would like to conclude my opening remarks.



ISHIHARA, Nobuo President of the Research Institute for Local Government

I conduct research on various issues faced by local governments, provide consultation and coordinate with the central government ministries to solve issues. I have been invited to the East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress every year because of those connections.

Through the conference I can see that local governments directly work with their residents and make enormous efforts to enhance the social welfare of those residents. The issues may vary depending on the region and time, but this conference, in which local government officials discuss issues and find the hints to solve them, is extremely meaningful.

This meeting started in commemoration of the 1300th anniversary of the Nara Heijokyo Capital, and I believe participating local government officials truly feel they benefit a great deal from this meeting every time. It is also my great pleasure that the number of participating local governments and participants is increasing as a result. I would like to again express my gratitude to Governor Arai as well as to Nara prefecture.

I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing that the conference today will be an even more meaningful one.

List of Delegation Heads of Participating Local and Regional Governments

People's Republic of China

Name	Organization
Anhui Province	
WANG, Xin	Director General, Foreign Affairs Office of Anhui Provincial People's Government
Chengdu City	
GAO, Jianjun	Deputy Secretary General of Chengdu Municipal Government, Chengdu Municipal People's Government
Xi'an City	
CHEN, Zhong	Director, Finance and Economic Department of Xi'an People's Congress
Suzhou City	
MA, Hongzhong	Vice Chairman, Secretary General, Suzhou Municipal People's Political Consultative Committee, Suzhou Municipal People's Government
Dongying City	
HAN, Wei	Deputy Director, Urban and Rural Planning Bureau of Dongying City

Republic of Indonesia

Name	Organization
Province of West Java	
Ahmad Heryawan	Governor, Province of West Java
Province of Yogyakarta Special Region	
Ratnawati Evi Maria	Head, Population and Family Planning Board, Yogyakarta Office

Malaysia

Name	Organization
Melaka State	
Mohd Nasir Sheikh Salim	Secretary of Local Authority, Melaka Historic City Council

Republic of Korea

Name	Organization
Gyeonggi-do Province	
KANG, Kyoung A	Project Manager, Women & Family Bureau
Chungcheongnam-do Province	
YOON, Jong In	Vice Governor, Chungcheongnam-do Province
Gongju City	
KIM, Sang Tae	Director, Rural Development Division
Seosan City	
LEE, Su Young	General Director, Resident Support Bureau Seosan Municipal Office (City Hall)
Gyeongsangbuk-do Province	
JUNG, Jin Woo	Director, Division of Global Trade Cooperation & Foreign Affairs

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Name	Organization
Phu Tho Province	
BUI Van Quang	Permanent Deputy Secretary, Phu Tho Provincial Party Committee
Thua Thien Hue Province	
NGUYEN Van Cao	Chairman, Provincial People's Committee
Hue City	
CHAU Van Loc	Vice Chairman, Hue City People's Committee

List of Delegation Heads of Participating Local and Regional Governments

Japan

Name	Organization
Yamagata Prefecture	
TAKAHASHI, Koichiro	International Affairs Planning Specialist, Inbound Tourism and International Exchange Division
Fukushima Prefecture	
ABE, Hidehiro	Office Director, Osaka Office Fukushima Prefecture
Niigata Prefecture	
HOSAKA, Saki	Administrative Staff, International Affairs Division Governor's Policy Bureau
Fukui Prefecture	
IWAKABE, Akemi	Director, Children and Family Affairs Division
Yamanashi Prefecture	
KOJIMA, Toru	Deputy Director General, Strategic Policy Planning Department
Nagano Prefecture	
KITAHARA, Tomihiro	Director General, Agricultural Administration Department
Shizuoka Prefecture	
YAMAGUCHI, Shigenori	Director, Health and Welfare Department
Mie Prefecture	
YOKOTA, Koichi	Vice Director General, Department of Employment and Economic Affairs
Kyoto Prefecture	
NAKAMOTO, Haruo	Director General for Children's Affairs and Declining, Department of Health and Welfare
Wakayama Prefecture	
FUJIKI, Norihiro	Associate Director, Regional Policy Division Planning and Policy Bureau Planning Department
Shimane Prefecture	
SAKAMOTO, Nobuhisa	Department Director General, Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
Tokushima Prefecture	
TAO, Kanji	Department Head, Environment and Citizens' Affairs Department
Kagawa Prefecture	
KUDAI, Yuji	Councilor, Kagawa Prefectural Government
Nara Prefecture	
ARAI, Shogo	Governor, Nara Prefecture
Tagajo City	
KIKUCHI, Kenjiro	Mayor, Tagajo City
Niigata City	
SHINODA, Akira	Mayor, Niigata City
Nara City	
NAKAGAWA, Gen	Mayor, Nara city
Tenri City	
NAMIKAWA, Ken	Mayor, Tenri City
Kashihara City	
MORISHITA, Yutaka	Mayor, Kashihara City
Gose City	
HIGASHIGAWA, Yutaka	Mayor, Gose City
Ikaruga Town	
KOJO, Toshishige	Mayor, Ikaruga Town
Asuka Village	
MORIKAWA, Yuichi	Mayor, Asuka Village
Koryo Town	
YAMAMURA, Yoshiyuki	Mayor, Koryo Town
Shimoichi Town	
HORIUCHI, Hirofumi	Assistant Director, Community Development Promotion Division

Name	Organization
Nara Prefectural Assembly	
KOIZUMI, Yonezo	Vice Chairperson
MATSUO, Isao	Chairman, Committee on Economic and Labor
TSUBUTANI, Tomoshi	Chairman, Special Committee for Measures against Declining Birthrate and for the Promotion of Women's Roles in Society

Overview

The 7th East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress



Theme 1

Community and Regional Development

Participating local and regional governments	People’s Republic of China : Anhui Province, Chengdu City (Sichuan Province), Dongying City (Shandong Province)
	Republic of Indonesia : Province of West Java Malaysia : Melaka State Republic of Korea : Chungcheongnam-do Province, Seosan City (Chungcheongnam-do Province) Socialist Republic of Viet Nam : Thua Thien Hue Province, Hue City (Thua Thien Hue Province) Japan : Nara Prefecture, Tagajo City (Miyagi Prefecture), Kashihara City (Nara Prefecture), Shimoichi Town (Nara Prefecture)
Lecturer	GOTO, Kenichi CEO of Prot Asia and Pacific Inc.

Presentation on Regional Reports



Anhui Province, China

Along with rapid economic growth in China, it is necessary to nurture new growing fields in Anhui Province. In particular, there is a great tourism demand for culture and it is becoming a major trend. Anhui Province has an abundance of tourism resources, such as cuisine, tea, and ancient architecture, and the southern parts of the province which are rich in nature have been designated as international culture model districts. On the other hand, comprehensive tourism development, such as infrastructure, including signs and bathrooms for tourists, and a balance between the development and preservation of the natural environment are not yet sufficient. We will set our goal high to attract tourists and also to promote integration of the entire model district as a tourist destination to create a world-class tourist site as a model for a beautiful China. We are tackling environmental and cultural preservation while considering how we can link our unique culture with tourism and economic development. We also believe training human resources in cultural and tourism industries is an imperative issue.



Chengdu City, China

Chengdu City, where farming villages surround the metropolitan area, strives to develop together and especially to decrease the disparity between the two areas. We integrate farming villages into the metropolitan system to create comprehensive plans and locate planners in each of the small villages. We are promoting the development of new, small farming village communities with up to 300 households per village while taking environmental preservation, regional history, and the opinions of local residents into account. We are also working on public services and infrastructure development, such as hospitals, clinics, public bathrooms, elementary schools, community support centers, public service centers, roads, and communication facilities. Furthermore, Chengdu City, which possesses vast farming lands, is introducing a stock corporation system based on farm lands as well as experimenting with group farmers and delegating the farming business to professional managers to manage to promote farm management.



Dongying City, China

Manufacturing industries, such as machinery and automobile tires, have blossomed in the Yellow River delta area in Dongying City. Currently, ecological and environmental preservation is an especially pressing issue because of alkalization of the soil. The Chinese government also made a policy to make the Yellow River delta area eco-friendly and has taken various measures by making the area a national level protected area. Wetland and forest parks have been developed as a part of traffic development and green campaign projects and we are considering utilizing the area as a tourism resource as well as for ecological purposes. The area has developed mainly around the chemical industry but is aiming to shift to an eco-friendly community. We will divide the area into an agricultural area and an ecosystem-protection area and establish development plans in accordance with the characteristics of each region. We will also promote effective utilization of land, shifting to the tertiary industries and green lifestyle.



Province of West Java, Indonesia

Indonesia is located where the Oceanic Plate moves and possesses extremely precious natural resources due to its geological diversity. But, at the same time, it is exposed to threats from various human activities. The Ciletuh Geopark development project is a collaborative work between the government, the private sector, universities, and the region. This project aims to acquire a status as a global tourist site by being certified by the UNESCO Global Geoparks. We cooperate with stakeholders in various fields to develop infrastructure and establish tourism goals. We also enhanced the power of regional communities through research in and development of geological and biological diversity and worked to promote their protection. On the other hand, boundaries between stakeholders have become an issue.



Melaka State, Malaysia

Together with the regeneration of the Melaka River, Melaka State launched a regeneration/clean-up project to utilize the Melaka urban district as historical heritage zone to achieve commercial development, for which a large grant was obtained from the federal government. Thanks to this project, the value of Melaka State was recognized and the Melaka River band has been significantly developed. Many jobs were created. Melaka City has multi-cultural, ethnic influences resulting from a long colonial history by England and Portugal. The urban environment is protected by city council regulations. Melaka State focuses on tourism and the number of tourists has been rapidly increasing since the launch of the regeneration project. When the second development project is completed by 2017 we are expecting even more tourists from both inside and outside of the country.



Chungcheongnam-do Province, Korea

The provincial office was relocated to a farming village area in 2012 and new city creation centering on the new provincial office is underway. Many public institutions are going to be relocated there and the city is expected to develop as the central city of the region. The city has been working on promotion of GREEN CITY which takes advantage of the existing terrain, introduction of renewable energy, creation of an agreeable city to achieve the “5-Nos” without telephone poles, overpasses, trash, fences and standing signboards. The plan also promotes the usage of bicycles through the development of cycling lanes, the construction of a public-designed city which introduced public designs in advertisements, the development of an education-specialized city by concentrating community facilities, such as schools and playgrounds, in one area for communities to share, barrier-free design of the entire city, community development where residents feel safe even at the time of disaster, and “creative city” where regional identities of each city and county in the province are featured. On the other hand, problems include how to implement measures to prevent environmentally damaging development and how to carry on joint operations of city management.



Seosan City, Korea

At Garorim Bay, one of the five great tidal flats in the world, seashells and octopus are farmed to increase the income of fisherman. But, the decreasing fishing ground due to environmental changes, aging population, and a decline in the fishing industry accompanied by lean hauls has been issues. Along with development of clam processing facilities and fishing ports, which are infrastructures for the fishing industry, and assistance in the construction of fishing ground management ships, we are focusing on implementing a comprehensive plan to attract tourists to develop a new income source. Comprehensive experience/tourism-oriented fishing village development projects are created for city residents; projects to attract tourists, such as offering massages on tidal flats and marine experiences were developed. The area is being redeveloped as a vitalized area proactively utilizing the resources of a fishing village. Diverse PR activities are also being employed, such as regularly holding fishing-related festivals and developing direct sales depots, to promote consumption.



Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam

In Thua Thien Hue Province there is an area that possesses a unique ecosystem called Tam Giang-Cau Hai, which becomes the focus of environmental protection, such as growing mangrove forests. Land and resources are brought under development to expand the economy in this area, but environmental protection measures along the coastal areas need to be taken into account at the same time. However, since the public's awareness for natural environmental protection is low, raising their awareness is an urgent issue. Promoting the conservation of nature requires funds, but we lack them. In order to utilize rich natural resources to develop the region, we are hoping to achieve both regional development and environmental protection, and also be able to focus on advertising and globalization to attract tourists.



Hue City, Vietnam

Hue City has a rich history and traditional culture. As a provincial capital, the city is a driving force for the entire province. Under the principle where we undergo urbanization and environmental protection at the same time, we have plans for the construction of wastewater and garbage collection networks and also have long-term district development plans for trade, handicraft manufacturing, and education. We are also hoping to develop roads in tourism sites to welcome tourists. We would also like to develop the Huong Giang shores and improve the standard of living of people who live on boats along with addressing other environmental and hygiene problems. The aquatic environment in the southern part of the city has improved thanks to the support from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Association) and KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency). On the other hand, we still have issues, such as high population density, heavy traffic, delayed re-planning of streets due to lack of funds, and low awareness of environmental protection.



Nara Prefecture, Japan

Gojo Shinmachi preserves and utilizes the townscape of traditional houses as a regional resource, but the houses themselves are private properties and cooperation from local residents and the private sector is indispensable for their continuous maintenance, management, and operation. After continuously hosting a flea market using the front part of traditional houses, which were made possible by public and private partnerships, it became a large event that attracted 80,000 visitors. This helped make local residents recognize the power of the townscape and lead to their preservation awareness being raised. Using public-private funds to renovate and open vacant Machiya houses as restaurants has become a regional model case, which boosted the utilization of vacant houses. Through consensus building with local residents, the town was recognized as one of the nation's important preservation district of historic buildings and was qualified to receive grants from the Japanese government. However, there are still issues such as the increasing number of vacant houses due to decreasing population and the aging of staff that manage the district. We would like to continue to seek solutions.



Tagajo City, Japan

In March of this year, we opened a “hub of knowledge” facility, which combined a city-owned library, bookstore, and restaurants near Tagajo Station. The number of visitors increased much faster than was expected and exceeded one million in a little over seven months. 1.6 million visitors are expected yearly. Since we hoped to create the “best cultural exchange hub in the Tohoku area”, including city halls in the surrounding areas, a culture center featuring an excellent sound system, a prefectural library, and the remains of government buildings in special historic sites, we utilized a regional revitalization project by the Japanese government to hold “picture books across the world exhibition” at the new library and also an opera performance at the culture center. Centering around Nara, there was a historic period where the nation was formed with the western capital in Dazaifu and the eastern capital in Tagajo. Since Tagajo had exchanges with Todaiji Temple in Nara because of a link where they both formed an ancient state back then, we had the head of Todaiji Temple visit us after the Great East Japan Earthquake. The “Todaiji Temple Exhibition” is slated to be held in the city in 2018.



Kashihara City, Japan

Imai Town in Kashihara City, which was selected as a nationally important preservation district of historic buildings, has promoted the preservation of the townscape as a quaint residential area and living environment improvement. However, the number of vacant houses has increased due to the decreasing birthrate, aging population, and decreasing population, which spoils the beauty of the townscape. We are now utilizing vacant houses in the district to match the current needs to lead to regional revitalization. For instance, vacant houses are used as part of the “Imai Afterschool Care Club”, which is an afterschool youth development facility. We also aim to realize the concept “community development based on medicine” where we tie in with Nara Medical University to use a vacant house as a medical hub facility. We are working together with regional groups that introduce vacant houses to clients to solve the vacant house issue, but renovation on vacant traditional wooden Japanese homes requires artisans who have skills in traditional construction methods. The number of such artisans is dramatically decreasing, so we are endeavoring to expand the network to other areas to secure the human resources.



Shimoichi Town, Japan

With “promoting development of vigorous community” as a theme and as part of the “transfer and settle in Yoshino Shimoichi project”, Shimoichi Town develops community centers, promotes registration with the vacant house bank, creates a supporting system in the community, provides matching support for vacant houses, work and area, constructs regional transportation system, and creates and advertises regional appeals. For a community development project as a “market” town, we are promoting small-hub businesses and regional industry step-up businesses. Shimoichi Town, in which there is an abundance of forest resources and major industries including agriculture, forestry, commerce, and carpentry, is a historic market town located in the center of Nara Prefecture, and it possesses many regional products. However, as the population is declining, we are making efforts to increase the number of people who will transfer to and settle in the region and stay active in the regional communities. Since the amount of private consumer spending that flows out of the area is high, we hope to promote an influx of consumer spending from outside of the area for industrial development that will lead to the creation of the “market” town.

The Exchange of Opinions

- The central government and regional governments are working together to protect aquatic resources, such as rivers and lakes, in Anhui Province. For instance, we are seeing if it is possible to make a policy where a regional government upstream receives an incentive from regional governments downstream or the central government when the quality of water in the upper stream of the river has improved. Moreover, we are hoping to use the incentive to promote an environmental protection policy, such as “raising awareness of separating garbage”.
(Anhui Province, China)
- In order to improve aquatic environments such as rivers, measures to protect the way of life of the people who live on the rivers must be taken into account and substantial funds are required. Therefore, we are very grateful to receive support from our own government as well as from overseas.
(Hue City, Vietnam)
- Construction of a new city is currently underway. In Korea, basic site preparation work is conducted by the private sector, which is approved by the administrative organizations. A major role of the administrative organizations is to establish guidelines for the private sector, confirm plans, and monitor to ensure the plans are properly executed as planned.
(Chungcheongnam-do Province, Korea)
- We think the benefit produced by the development of the city area should be returned to farming villages, and we distribute investments in farming villages. As a measure against vacant houses in the farming villages, we are turning them back into farm land.
(Chengdu City, China)
- Accepting tourists in local residents’ homes and public facilities as homestay benefits both local residents and tourists. Residents can receive income from accepting the homestay itself, and residents who know the area well can directly tell tourists what there is to offer.
(Province of West Java, Indonesia)
- Shimoichi Town mentioned that the town is the birthplace of disposable chopsticks. It may be a well-known fact for the residents, but the “birthplace” factor will become an extremely appealing value when strategizing regional revitalization. It is essential to employ factors that differentiate your town from other regions.
(Lecturer, GOTO)
- We have been working together with the local community to establish a vacant house utilization area and supporting the groups that utilize vacant houses. Since many shops on shop streets have gone out of business, we concluded a community development partnership agreement with municipalities to address specific issues, such as establishing a master plan. We also host an art event “Nara Machiya Art Festival HANARART” utilizing vacant houses.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- When considering how old townscape in the region should be utilized, including for tourism purposes, it is important to rethink how you can preserve the old town from the future-oriented standpoint, not from the present standpoint. You have to maintain the town as a place to live while seeking a high-quality, new form of tourism based on that.
(Lecturer, GOTO)
- The number of Chinese tourists to Japan is increasing, but the so-called “explosive buying” has declined. Experience-oriented tourism, such as skiing, staying at a bed and breakfast, nature, and traditional culture experiences and attending concerts is increasing.
(Anhui Province, China)
- We tend to focus on how to stop people from leaving the area, but the role of community is changing with time, including in population-concentrated metropolises, and it is important to objectively evaluate the value of your community and what kind of role it can play.
(Lecturer, GOTO)
- We have been scrambling for people, products, and work for a long period of time across Japan. Figuring out how administrative organizations can secure them is a significant problem.
(Kashihara City, Japan)

- It is an issue that many tourists visit Nara on day trips and there are not enough accommodation facilities because Nara has easy access to Kyoto and Osaka. We are currently inviting hotels to Nara and planning to hold cultural events in the city while collaborating with neighboring prefectures to promote tourism.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- There is a limit to creating regional appeal if you are only thinking about your own region. We should continuously promote projects that build a new system that creates a flow of people into the community by pioneering and connecting communities that utilize the appeals of other communities to enhance the value of your own.
(Lecturer, GOTO)

(Review Comments by the Lecturer)



Regarding the issues faced by all communities, unless a flow of people is created into the community, not only the flow of products, it will not lead to truly bountiful community development no matter how you spend money and time. We could discuss the issue from a multifaceted point of view which combines “community development and tourism”.

What is most important as a regional tourism resource in community development is the life of the residents who live there.

There are five key words—“Know, See, Touch, Feel and Connect”—in tourism. In order to proceed with three steps of “touch”, “feel”, and “connect” in addition to existing tourism advertisement “know” and “see”, it is crucial to design a region so that tourists will want to come back again. Regions have various tourism resources, but the future tourism will be that area residents understand that connections with people are the most important thing in the end, and that the area strives for these connections as a whole.

It is important not only to take pride in your own region, but also that each region opens up and connect with each other to establish relationships so that they can be proud of each other. In addition to various regional appeals, if regional residents could connect with visitors, that will boost demand for tourism in the future and create a new flow. It will result in improvements in resident and cultural powers of the region, leading to striving for “first-class community development” with pride.

Various wisdom and technologies were brought from Asian countries to Nara, which used to be the center of Japan, and they have been well protected until now. However, I suggest it would be perfect if we review and learn history once again and local governments gathered here today could protect technologies and cultures on their own and continue to work together to protect them within the frame of Asia. Looking back over the past and cherishing what is there and understanding its value will in fact lead to thinking about the future and cherishing what is available now for the future. Namely, “reliable future lies in the nostalgic past”.

What is most important to solve various issues in community development is educating human resources. Global personnel connections will lead to a bright future. I have great hopes new actions will be made through cooperation between local governments in East Asia.



Theme 2**Agriculture and Regional Economic Development**

Participating local and regional governments	People's Republic of China : Suzhou City (Anhui Province)
	Republic of Korea : Gongju City (Chungcheongnam-do Province)
	Socialist Republic of Viet Nam : Phu Tho Province
	Japan : Yamagata Prefecture, Nagano Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, Shimane Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Gose City (Nara Prefecture) Koryo Town (Nara Prefecture)
Lecturer	MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Senior Economist, the Japan Research Institute, Ltd.

Presentation on Regional Reports



Suzhou City, China

Yongqiao District, the northern most area of Suzhou City, is a crucial food producing area in China and was selected to be one of the country's model districts. The four greatest industries (grains, vegetables, livestock farming, and forestry) were developed in the area, and agricultural management and organizational change have been sought and achieving results. The passing rate for residue inspections in agricultural products is 100% and no severe safety problems have occurred in livestock farming either. An agricultural model district was established which focuses on the industrialization of agriculture, especially organizational change and the promotion of branding products. This is one of the agricultural innovation experimental sections promoted by the province. Furthermore, the city is promoting land liquidation and implementing one of the most cutting-edge measures in the country where acquiring title to the land allows for obtaining loans using the land as collateral. Overall, 106 new type of agriculture management bodies are benefitting from this financial policy.



Gongju City, Korea

A paradigm shift is required due to the decreasing number and aging of the farming population and the outflow of population to other areas. Since the area has had an agricultural system based on "small lot production of many products", we reinforced the direct sales system and are focusing on distribution, processing, and sales of products while we are working on the vitalization of green tourism as a city that possesses a world cultural heritage site. The creation of a foundation to circulate local food in the area is going well. Locally-grown vegetables are provided to school lunch centers, and the number of direct sales depots has been increased. We have also built processing lines for agricultural products to achieve the sixth industrialization of the principal product of the region, chestnuts. In order to secure young farmers, we nurture farm-management clubs and implement projects to welcome returnees to farms or villages as well as offering farm experience projects. On the other hand, policies to stop the outflow of the population, address the aging population, and the people leaving agriculture are insufficient. The number of producer's groups, the main body of regional cycling agriculture, and product development, such as farming village tours in collaboration with historic culture of Paekche are also an issue.



Phu Tho Province, Vietnam

Phu Tho Province is located in the mountainous inland area of northern Vietnam, where approximately 80% of the total area is agricultural land and approximately 80% of the population lives in farming villages. The agricultural output of 2015 achieved 7% growth, which contributed to 25% of the province's GRDP. The region, famous for rice cultivation, also has thriving fruit and vegetable cultivation. On the other hand, while there are many agricultural lands, the small ones are dispersed which causes low agricultural productivity, scale, value, and competitiveness. The improvement of farmers' incomes, standard of living and the regional environment are also issues. We are hoping to take the following six measures: reorganization of the whole agriculture, large-scale farm development, strengthening the livestock industry, inviting foreign investment in agriculture, the improvement of management efficiency by administrative organizations, and the expansion of the channels of distribution for agricultural products in collaboration with neighboring provinces.



Yamagata Prefecture, Japan

We believe it is important to promote industries that are based in the region so as to lead to the improvement of income and the creation of jobs and the revitalization of the region as a result. We are also promoting economic activities called "Yamagata Mori(forest) nomics" featuring forest resources from the mountains and forests that account for 70% of the prefectural land. In order to construct a green ecosystem, we established a council for unprocessed wood distribution in April of this year which promotes a forestry production base and stable timber supply produced in the prefecture through various support and subsidies. We are also planning a test run of a large laminated wood factory. A woody biomass power plant is also under construction. We are expanding the usage of timber produced in the prefecture, such as in the development of fire-proof components by companies in the prefecture. We established a Forestry Department at Yamagata Prefectural College of Agriculture and Forestry, and also commenced a system to certify young foresters who play a core role in the industry as youth foresters this year.



Nagano Prefecture, Japan

We promote our agricultural and livestock products using a unified brand called "Oishii Shinshu Food" in order to gain recognition of agricultural and livestock products made in the Shinshu region and also to contribute to the growth of the regional economy. Products are classified into three categories for branding: "Premium" for products that were carefully-selected using the strictest standards, "Original" for products that are original to Nagano and have a higher market share across Japan, and "Heritage" for traditional regional products. We also initiated an effort for "local production for local consumption", not "local consumption for local production". "Ginza NAGANO" was established with the concept "connecting the region and capital". In the information magazine "TSUNAGU", the food producers and the way in which the food is produced are introduced and sellers and producers can find out consumption trends in the capital region. The product sales led to the attraction of tourists, which produced 2.5 billion yen worth of economic ripple effects last year. We are also focusing on foreign tourists by inviting them to agricultural experiences and on educational trips.



Wakayama Prefecture, Japan

Wakayama ranks first in the production of mandarin oranges, persimmons, and plums, and third in the yield of fruits in Japan. However, citizens of old age account for a large percentage of the population portion, and the proportion of the working-age population is low. Agricultural and fishery incomes have been declining yearly and have remained sluggish since 2000. Although the number of tourists is increasing, the sales amount per store ranks near the bottom. Based on the fact that regional appeals have not been fully displayed, we as a prefecture are providing support so that municipalities can disseminate information on their various resources, such as landscapes and traditional food and culture, across Japan. We are also advertising our warm climate and existing sports facilities to invite training camps from both inside and outside of Japan. On the other hand, we have an issue of finding personnel to continuously take charge of such regional revitalization projects. We are hoping to review projects from different standpoints and propose new ideas.



Shimane Prefecture, Japan

Hilly and mountainous areas account for the majority of the prefecture. The center of agriculture is rice farming, and farming villages are supported by part-time farmers. Village-based group farming, in which farmers in each village have joint ownership of agricultural machines and maintain farm lands and water sources together, has been implemented for many years, but smooth lending/borrowing and maintenance of farmlands accompanied by the right of inheritance is necessary to prevent the abandonment of farm lands. Therefore, it is important to incorporate small village-based group farming organizations and nurture cross-regional co-operational organizations that link them across the region. The cross-regional co-operational organizations allows for managerial diversification, such as joint ownership of large machines, processing agricultural products, and the introduction of high-profit farm products, as well as expanding businesses other than agriculture to maintain farmlands and villages in the hilly, mountainous areas. There are currently eight cross-regional co-operational organizations in the prefecture, many of which were created based on the individual skills of charismatic leaders. We need to expand this system even further.



Nara Prefecture, Japan

The pillars of the prefectural agricultural policy are: nurturing individuals who are eager to engage in agricultural management (opening of Nara Agriculture and Food International College, or NAFIC), branding agricultural, livestock, and aquatic products made in Nara (establishment of the certification system “Nara Prefecture Premium Select”), and dissemination of information on food and agriculture (participation in “Hong Kong Food Expo 2016”, which has a remarkable information dissemination effect, and opening “TOKINOMORI” in Shiroganedai, Tokyo, that features a local specialty shop and restaurants). We are promoting the “Gurutto Auberge Concept” in which we collaborate with the NAFIC with the aim of revitalizing the area while we support the Nara Food Festival that utilizes ingredients produced in Nara and also direct sale depots of produce to promote local production for local consumption. Thanks to the enhancement and reinforcement of such projects, the number of agricultural corporations and the number of locations and sales of direct sale depots of produce are increasing. In the future we aim to take measures on abandoned farmland, promoting women’s success, strengthening the production system of Nara vegetables, and market cultivation.



Gose City, Japan

As an even further decrease in population is expected, how to increase the number of visitors from inside and outside of the region is a challenge. There is also a concern about the lack of farmers due to aging and also about the trend to turn away from agriculture and abandoned farmlands. Handa Rice, Gose Persimmons, Yamato Yams are regional specialty produce of Gose City. They are not commonly well known, but by holding a market we advertise them in Tokyo and on a shop street near the local station. We can effectively appeal to local residents and visitors from outside of the city who were not interested in produce from Gose City. Holding various events along with the market contributes to the revitalization of deserted shop street near the station, from which we believe producers feel the joy of selling through direct transactions with consumers. On the other hand, there are issues, such as the lack of novelty, because the same produce is sold at the same time, the fact that the market cannot be held between seasons, and that it has not led to revitalization of the shop streets at a fundamental level.



Koryo Town, Japan

We are promoting our own measures: “Kengyo (Healthy and Fun) Agriculture”, in which the town borrows abandoned farmlands and lends them to residents who are interested in agriculture but do not own a farmland, and; “Agriculture School”, which provides a wide range of individuals, including retirees and those who newly want to engage in agriculture, with techniques on how to profit through agriculture information about everything from farming basics to sales. The proper management of farmlands and the preservation of the environment and landscapes are meaningful not only to farming village areas but also to residents in the neighboring city areas. It is necessary for well-balanced community development to provide safe, fresh produce to regional residents and to make agriculture established as an industry to bring economic results through the distribution of produce. Farmlands and farmers are most important in the promotion of agriculture, but we are also considering effective measures to reduce the initial costs for those who want to enter agriculture and diversify sales channels.

The Exchange of Opinions

- Although we intend to use regional agricultural products for school lunches, there is an issue where the price of produce is higher, which will be reflected in the cost of lunch. As we believe children who consume tasty produce in their childhood will continue to do so as adults, thereby leading to a longer healthy life expectancy, we are hoping to continue to work on this project.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- We have been operating a school lunch center since last year and the supply of local ingredients has been operating smoothly.
(Gongju City, Korea)
- Although the maintenance cost for operating the local specialty shop in Ginza cannot be covered by sales revenue, we are operating it with the idea that the shop's information disseminating role and economic ripple effect will eventually bring results to the prefecture.
(Nagano Prefecture, Japan)
- We hope to open a local specialty shop together with a restaurant so that people in the capital region have a better understanding of and enjoy the produce made in Nara Prefecture to further expand sales channels.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- The sales at the local specialty shop in Ginza adopts an application system, where only products which meet standards, such as local originality, are featured. Products that have not sold for a few months are removed and the store gives feedback to the seller as to why they did not sell. That improves the producer's motivation and encourages them to try again.
(Nagano Prefecture, Japan)
- "Station Marché", sponsored by a private railway company, is a project in which train cars that are usually used on a line are provided as a market place to sell local specialty products.
(Gose City, Japan)
- With the establishment of cross-regional co-operational organizations, leadership and strong support from the government will become essential in the future.
(Shimane Prefecture, Japan)
- In most cases, the distribution of profits gained by group farming corporations is commensurate with the amount of time worked, instead of the land area provided.
(Shimane Prefecture, Japan)
- Since most farmlands in Japan are separately owned by individuals, it is extremely inefficient if farming is done individually. To solve this problem, a new form of agricultural operation is currently trending, where individually owned farmlands are temporarily leased out to an agricultural corporation or a business corporation, and have a certain farmer to cultivate the leased lands as one farming area. Here is how it works basically. Since it does not yield any profit by just owning land due to the low value of farmland, land is leased out to a corporation for a low price. In this form, the landowner can earn some rental income, while at the same time, a large part of the revenue earned by the corporation goes to the farmer who actually works there.
(Lecturer, MOTANI)
- As it occurs at any region in Japan, without export competitiveness, agricultural sales never increase and farm products will be in excess supply due to falling population. As a result of this situation, there is a serious issue of abandonment of cultivation in Japan, where farmlands that lasted over 1,000 years have started to be abandoned one after another.
(Lecturer, MOTANI)
- There is an issue of abandoned farmland in China as well. We help shift such abandoned farmlands to agricultural cooperatives or large farmers, and if the condition of the land is unfavorable, a new crop is planted to enhance the condition.
(Suzhou City, China)
- In Vietnam, since the land is owned by the government and individuals only possess a right to use it, the land is mandatorily collected by the government if abandoned for three years and reassigned to others. It is also an issue in Vietnam that young people move away from agriculture.
(Phu Tho Province, Vietnam)

- Even if farmland is massive, agricultural production value will not rise without producing farm goods with high added-value. Conversely, even if farmland is small in size, agricultural production value is high when it focuses on the production of farm products with high added-value which can be sold for higher prices. There were many opinions in common among participants from Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam that they are working towards putting high added-value on farm products in order to increase farmers' revenue.

On the other hand, there are people who are living out of the same farming system for the protection of the landscape and also for regional development of the tourism industry in a spirit of observance while protecting terraced paddy fields of old standing despite not so high earnings.

(Lecturer, MOTANI)

- Since the usage of high and new technology is unknown territory for us, we are hoping to utilize your knowledge and experience.

(Phu Tho Province, Vietnam)

- In order to support those who wish to be engaged in agriculture, the town providing free agriculture training which fill the gaps between the trainings provided by the central and regional governments, such as lecture sessions at night and practical training in the farm and selling produce at direct sales depots, will make support more accessible to those who need it.

(Koryo Town, Japan)

- The number of people who wish to be engaged in agriculture or return to become a farmer after retirement is increasing in Korea as well. There is a college of agriculture and fishery that provides support for people who wish to return to the farming business. Municipalities also provide similar support.

(Gongju City, Korea)

- Even in cases where agricultural land is fragmented like in Japan and unprofitable under ordinary circumstances, it can be effectively utilized. For example, if retired people take up farming to produce agricultural goods to consume by themselves, it will relieve anxieties in their retirement. In some cases, people have become successful as professional farmers after retirement. For promoting good health in retired people and securing a way to make a living for retired individuals, as well as a fulfilling life after retirement, the existence of agricultural land, in fact, serves a positive role for society as a whole. Such new roles of agriculture have been recognized.

(Lecturer, Mr. MOTANI)

(Review Comments by the Lecturer)



In discussion of this theme, we had local governments from Japan and Korea, although their agricultural scale may be small, mainly who are radically pursuing a new agriculture to produce fruits, vegetables, meat, and so on, and operating intensive horticultural farming with high added-value, for example. And from China and Vietnam, the local governments who are feeding its country by their large-scale farming districts and exporting globally joined us. Those participating local governments have very different forms of agriculture and different land systems, yet they carry common issues, and in fact their goal is the same. It was surprising to know.

Competition in agriculture is never a fighting over something. Producing higher priced, better quality farm products to sell to wealthy people is not a zero-sum competition, but a competition that leads to a bigger pie overall. At times when countries are becoming rich, more and more people choose to eat safer and more delicious food than buying cars or electronics. In this way, it is possible to increase the overall sales of agriculture through competition. I certainly hope that everyone who participated today will promote positive competition and facilitate the revitalization of agriculture across Asia. Agriculture is not inferior to manufacturing industry. The agriculture-centered era will for sure resume in developed countries.



Promotion of Measures against Declining Birthrate

Presentation on Regional Reports



Factors underlying our declining birth rate include the one-child policy and economic problems as well as women's career advancements and delayed marriage. As a means to develop the population in balanced manner on a long-term basis, we decided to raise the birth rate up to around 1.8. We started with relaxing our birth registration system from a screening system to a notification system based on own birth plan, then increased prenatal and postnatal leaves, and also put policies in place to lessen the burden on families. Additionally, we are putting our focus on making childbirth services free of charge in rural areas, moving forward with policies such as medical expense aids in urban areas, upbringing the physically and mentally sound youth, and enriching public services for urban migrants. Furthermore, we have facilitated cooperation between medical care and nursing care, in our efforts to strengthen the service functions for seniors, and improved living standards of solitary old people. On the other hand, other problems, including the undersupply of public resources such as education and sanitation resulting from easing of the one-child policy, and the burden of nursing care for parents of only children, remain to be solved.



The birth rate in Province of Yogyakarta Special Region is a low figure in Indonesia, but it is on a gradual rise, and the trend is completely opposite from that of other participating local governments. The region is called a “students’ town” where many colleges are situated. With an inflow of young people from other parts of the country, people between the ages of 10 and 24 make up one fourth of its overall population. We are currently tackling the issue of how to lower the birth rate with the implementation of a program targeted to create high-quality families in the future. Through this program, we are promoting a two-children policy. Concurrently, we are aiming to build a society where people can lead healthier lives by improving education provided at schools and in society with the establishment of a counseling center for young generation to raise the marriage age among young people.



Gyeonggi-do Province, Korea

Gyeonggi-do Province is a vibrant city that has a large inflow of young people; yet, its birth rate has been declining for ten consecutive years. In the past, over 90% of our budget allocated to measures against the declining birth rate was related to childcare costs. However, we have made a paradigm shift to focus on comprehensive measures against delayed marriage and non-marriage, including employment issues of young people. Recently, after discussions at an administrative department related to countermeasures for the falling birth rate, housing support through grants has been commenced as a means to encourage parents to have multiple children. Our activities do not stop at the current employment-focused support; we are carrying out a project called “Working Youths Passbook” to help the formulation of future planning through employment maintenance and asset building. Also, because there are a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises in the province, we are promoting consultations toward shifting from a traditional corporate culture to more family-friendly management, and also endorsing a company certification system. At the same time, we are working to change the way of thinking in society as a whole by providing education to younger generations to grow positive thoughts toward family and marriage.



Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Korea

The number of children is declining in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. Consequently, the number of childcare facilities and the number of children who use those facilities are decreasing. As a measure for the declining birth rate, our target is to realize a childcare policy that enables all children to grow up healthy and happy, parents to leave their children at a childcare facility with ease of mind, and people to balance child-rearing and family. For instance, we bear the costs of raising children prior to entering elementary school in the name of childcare support costs, provide aids for childcare fees, and help enable children at daycare centers to receive the same education provided at preschools, as well as supply at-home child-rearing allowances. We are also carrying forward with development of childcare infrastructure such as expansions of public daycare centers and support in installations of childcare facilities at workplace. Furthermore, we made it mandatory for all childcare facilities to install surveillance cameras in order to strengthen the safety and security of childcare. On the other hand, false declarations of employment status to take advantage of the childcare system are increasing.



Fukushima Prefecture, Japan

Although the total fertility rate in Fukushima Prefecture has exceeded that of before the earthquake disaster, the number of births is on the decline due to a decrease in the population of young women and a rise in the average age of first marriage. Young people's employment is not stable owing to the reduced regional economic strength; women's turnover associated with childbirth and child-rearing is on the rise. According to the survey conducted on residents of the prefecture, there is a need for improvement in childbirth and child-rearing environment as administrative support, so that people can receive consultations on childbirth and child-rearing, and people can raise children while working. Our prefecture is promoting the “Seamless Support on Marriage, Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Child-rearing Project” in an effort to achieve the desired birth rate of 2.16 in 2040. In concrete terms, we have been making efforts in training “volunteer helpers” who help in meeting potential partners, establishing the “Fukushima Marriage and Child-rearing Support Center”, implementing aids for specific fertility treatments, providing various support such as postnatal childcare consultation and care by midwives, and popularizing and expanding “IkuBoss (bosses with fatherhood).”



Fukui Prefecture, Japan

Fukui Prefecture ranks near the top in the employment rate of women, the percentage of double income households, and the percentage of three-generation households nationally. We also keep a zero-waiting list for those entering childcare centers. Besides, the percentage of lifelong singles of both men and women is at a low level when compared nationally. We are currently taking actions in pursuit of “the highest level of happiness in child-rearing in Japan” and “the best marriage support in Japan.” Specifically, the actions include a subsidy for companies promoting childcare leave for those with babies aged zero, Fukui pregnancy support benefits, an accreditation for companies serving as a model of supporting child-rearing, consultation by child-rearing experts and temporary childcare, subsidizing companies that grant grandparents' childcare leave, and an execution of the “Three-children Support Project.” And as marriage support, a marriage consultant system, “Annoying but Thankful Matchmaking” has been continuously run for more than fifty years. As a result of these measures, the third-child birth rate increased, and the number of companies is increasing, where the employees taking more than a year childcare leave accounts for 90% of the total childcare leavers.



Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan

As we regard a declining population as the highest priority issue, we have been taking measures against it. In particular, our big problem is that young women move out to the neighboring Tokyo area for employment which leads to a decline in the number of births. In response, we have been implementing various measures and activities to enhance a worry-free environment for people to get married and give birth to children. These include the “Yamanashi Matching Support Center” providing marriage support to single men and women who wish to get marriage, subsidies for infertility treatments, the “Maternity Care Center” where mothers can get a consultation on child-rearing and also receive postpartum care in peace, free childcare for second or subsequent children under three years old, support through extended day care and sick child care, and as a result, a zero-waiting list for those entering childcare centers has been maintained. In order to halt the declining birth rate, it is necessary to implement not only measures concerning the birth rate but also measures against social depopulation to keep young women in the prefecture; we are currently carrying out a population policy against both the social depopulation and the natural decline in population.



Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan

In Shizuoka Prefecture, we, in cooperation with municipalities, are implementing effective measures catered to characteristics of each municipality by utilizing “Fujinokuni Declining Birthrate Breakthrough Strategic Guidelines”, which were created based on understanding and analysis of factors affecting the fertility rate in each municipality. By the way, these guidelines were commended by the national government as an example of a pioneering approach by a municipal government. For example, holding a contest of Japanese classical verses about the period from couple's first encounter to child raising, helps promote the idea that “child-rearing is valuable work”. Registering companies as “Mt. Fuji-children supporters” creates momentum of encouraging marriage and supporting child-rearing in society as a whole. Furthermore, financial burdens are alleviated by expanding subsidies for infertility treatments. As described, we are making prefecture-wide efforts on the provision of seamless support, from finding a partner to child-rearing. Consequently, we are getting a good response on some of the activities. The total fertility rate in some municipalities is getting close to 2.0.



Kyoto Prefecture, Japan

The total fertility rate in Kyoto Prefecture is low; non-marriage, delayed marriage, and delayed childbearing are cited as the causing factors. There are many people who wish to get married but cannot to do so. Their reasons are financial factors and fewer opportunities to meet potential partners. As demonstrated by having enacted the Kyoto Ordinance for Measures Concerning Declining Birthrate, we are providing comprehensive support from marriage to child-rearing, including employment support and work style reform. We also established the “Kyoto marriage-hunting support center” as a means of marriage support, and offer assistance through “marriage hunting masters.” Additionally, aids for infertility treatments, setting up the “Kyoto Child-rearing Peer Support Center” providing a one-stop service for maternal and child health and also welfare programs as child-rearing support, and free early childhood education and childcare for third or subsequent children are some examples of countermeasures that are being carried out. We also established a certification system for companies promoting a work-life balance to encourage reassessment of work style. With the establishment of “prefectural citizens' assemblies,” we will tackle the problem of the declining birth rate across society as a whole.



Tokushima Prefecture, Japan

Our target is to realize a communal society where the young generation can fulfill their hopes regarding marriage, childbearing, and child-rearing, and they can feel joy throughout their lives. Our marriage support activities include the establishment of the “Tokushima Marriage Support Center,” training of “Awa Matchmaking Supporters,” and assistance to municipalities who engage in marriage support appropriate to the current regional condition. We are also planning to hold a singles event with women from big cities in anticipation of their migration to and settlement in Tokushima. Additionally, as ways to support during pregnancy and childbirth, midwives' support during prenatal and postpartum, education for young people on life planning, and aids for infertility treatments are in place. As ways to support child-rearing, medical subsidies for children through the end of elementary school, free childcare and after-school childcare clubs for third or subsequent children in proportion to the income, advancements in the organization of daycare centers and certified preschools and enrichment in childcare services, the training of “Mama Teleworkers,” and a certification program for companies who strive to build a work environment friendly to child-rearing are in place.



Kagawa Prefecture, Japan

We are aiming to realize “Child-rearing Friendly Prefecture, Kagawa” to provide seamless support all the way from marriage and pre-pregnancy to childbearing and child-rearing periods. In reaction to the fact that an accelerating delayed marriage and an increasing non-marriage are affecting the decline in birth rate, we established the “Kagawa Matchmaking Support Center” to create momentum to support individuals who want to get married. We have been providing personalized matchmaking services for those who want to get married, and consolidating singles events organized by business enterprises and such. Moreover, we are working to streamline a regional child-rearing support hub, relaxing the age and other requirements for receiving free childcare as support for families with multiple children, implementing “San-San Passport Project” which grants discounts at participating shops, and setting up a fund so that inventive projects designed by municipalities will be carried out. Furthermore, we conducted the “Support Children’s Future Survey” to study the effective support measures to fight against child poverty. Thanks to the aforementioned comprehensive efforts, the total fertility rate has been on the rise.



Nara Prefecture, Japan

Countermeasures against non-marriage, delayed marriage, and delayed childbearing are necessary to improve the declining birth rate. Nara Prefecture, by publicizing “Nara Prefecture, where it is easy to bear and rear children, and where children grow in a healthy manner” as a basic principle, is focusing on improving child-rearing environments and providing employment support for young people. For example, the prefecture is handling the publicity for “Nara marriage supporters (which was established by the prefecture, now run by private hands)” that set up community-based events to offer opportunities to meet new people, promoting a campaign to get shops and establishments registered as “Nara child-rearing supporters” who provide various services to families with small children, taking an approach to make young people feel a sense of happiness from child-rearing and to foster next-generation parents, and at the same time, we are strenuously working on employment support for young people as well. For the future, we are intending to hold discussions on allowing Nara Prefecture to back up programs administered by municipalities within the prefecture, and lay out measures in conjunction with actions taken by the national government.



Tenri City, Japan

An outflow of people in their 20’s and 30’s is significant; thus, it is essential to enhance support in a way that the young generation want to have children and raise them in Tenri City. The “Healthy Support Center for Child-rearing Generation” has been established as a core facility for the communal support for child-rearing. Along with the development of “Tenri City’s Version of Neuvola”, a system that provides support seamlessly from the pre-pregnancy to childbearing and child-rearing periods, we train for the first time in Nara Prefecture “postpartum doulas”, personnel who supports mothers during prenatal and postpartum periods with expertise. Additionally, as a measure for regional revitalization, an employment support facility, the “Tenri City Work Center,” was developed in an integrated manner with Hello Work (public job-placement center) which supports creating jobs for citizens, mainly young people and women. In like manner, the “Telework Center” was set up at a vacant space on a shopping street in an effort to realize flexible working styles unconstrained by place and time. And we are also moving forward with providing better environments for people to work in the community.



Ikaruga Town, Japan

In an effort to create a comfortable town for the child-raising generation to live in, we are providing communal support, such as the operation of a regional child-rearing support center, and the improvement of a support network in conjunction with daycare centers, families, community, related administrative agencies, and so on. Assistance utilizing empty houses for child-raising families moving into the town is under consideration as well. In an effort to become a better town to give birth to babies, we are also providing subsidies for ordinary infertility treatments and treatments for recurrent pregnancy loss, improving general physical examinations for pregnant women, and conducting checkups for periodontal disease for pregnant women. In an effort to create a town that is easier to raise children, we are maintaining a zero-waiting list for daycare centers, reducing childcare fees for low income families with multiple children, and planning to bring in a child-rearing support app system. As future plans on our table, we are considering assistance in shifting to three-generation households and living in close proximity to extended family, support for women in business start-ups and employment, establishment of a telework center, and also the establishment of a comprehensive support center for the child-rearing generation that provides one-stop support for the period from pregnancy to child-rearing.

The Exchange of Opinions

- Municipalities in Japan have been providing marriage support. Behind this is the present situation that young people have fewer opportunities to meet new people, aside from employment issues, as factors for the increasing non-marriage rate in young people.
(Lecturer, MATSUDA)
- The matchmaking system that Kagawa Prefecture is currently using was adopted from the method that Ehime Prefecture has been implementing for more than ten years. In comparison to private businesses, the registration fee is lower, and it is designed to create a casual meeting place as a starter. People who wish to receive more specific matchmaking support are directed to use services rendered by private businesses. It is appropriately compartmentalized.
(Kagawa Prefecture, Japan)
- The decreasing number of younger generations getting married was pointed out as one of the underlying factors of declining birthrate common to the nations. Municipal governments in Korea are also studying about this problem. On top of this factor, employment issues among young people exist. It can be said that this is a common issue for Japan and Korea. From a different perspective, with advancing women's participation in society in the nations, there is an issue with how to promote support for women in balancing work and family life as well as childcare, which is a common issue among Japan, Korea, and China.
(Lecturer, MATSUDA)
- Preschools take an additional role to support parents in child-rearing; preschool teachers offer parents advice on child-rearing. Also, Nara Prefecture's original preschool education program, aside from the national guideline, is under consideration so that high quality childcare service can be provided.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- In Yamanashi Prefecture, we started offering free childcare with an income limitation for second or subsequent children under three years old in 2015. This is a program organized in line with the questionnaire results that showed there are people putting off having a second child despite their desire to have more children.
(Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan)
- There are three major types of daycare centers in Japan; public and private licensed daycare centers, and unlicensed private daycare centers. There is a problem that unlicensed daycare centers cannot receive sufficient subsidies from the government because there are no established standards for unlicensed private daycare centers.
(Lecturer, MATSUDA)
- Upon having made childcare facilities communalized (free of charge), everyone started to take advantage of the childcare facilities, including full-time moms. This has been causing a social problem of mothers' lack of affection toward their children; we are encouraging mothers to shorten the hours of childcare facility usage and spend time with children at home. In response to women's social advancement, while promoting measures to shorten hours of overtime work in order to induce fathers' participation in child-rearing, we are shifting from a policy of leaving children at childcare facility to policies that help parents so that they can divide one's responsibility to raise children with affection at home, such as an issuance of at-home child-rearing allowances.
(Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Korea)
- Men who themselves balance work and life while managing employees with various constraints such as child-rearing, family care, own illnesses, etc., and simultaneously working to improve company's profits are called "IkuBoss." In Shizuoka Prefecture, we are publicizing the concept by giving recognition to companies where "IkuBoss" is producing outstanding performances, and by holding training courses for "IkuBoss" to increase the number of "IkuBoss."
(Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan)
- In Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, no night-work day and "Daddy Day" are in place; these are days when fathers can go home early without working overtime to participate in child-rearing. A mood where more and more fathers take part in child-rearing has begun to take root, and it is becoming normal.
(Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Korea)
- We are aiming to keep the average age of first marriage for women at 21 years old and to raise it to 25 years old for men. Since women's economic activities are still lower than men's, we are trying to increase women's economic activities while providing employment support to young married couples.
(Province of Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia)

- After the change of the one-child policy, we have been conducting an analysis, for example, “which is happier, families with one child or families with two children?”, along with a monitoring of the number of births. Having a second child lets parents have better marital and family relationships, and it also fosters an appreciation for family; we believe that having a second child contributes to education to build a better human character in children.
(Xi'an City, China)

- There are old sayings in Javanese, such as “One is happy when gathered with family with or without food” and “One can receive more blessings from God if one has many children.” As their family ties are very strong, counseling for local residents has not been working well. The reason why the birth rate in Province of Yogyakarta Special Region did not drop with the earthquake disaster in 2006 was because the local government secured a space for married couple by installing a “romance room” in temporary housings. Developing staff who gives counseling to local residents remains an issue to be addressed.
(Province of Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia)

(Review Comments by the Lecturer)



In the countries of the participating local and regional governments except Indonesia, declining birthrate is advancing. While children born outside of marriage are becoming common in Europe, in Asia, people's notion to have children in wedlock is still prevailing. Thus, a decrease in numbers of young people getting married leads directly to the declining birthrate. Besides the current reality that young people have fewer opportunities to meet new people, a worsening in younger generation's employment status was pointed out as well as the factor of the trend of non-marriage and delayed marriage by local governments from Japan and Korea. I believe that stimulating the local economy is the first step as a measure against declining birthrate.

While women's participation in society advances in Asia, because of the cultural background where the responsibility of child-rearing weighs heavily on women, the local governments should think what they can do about creating appropriate environments to balance both work and child-rearing and to support women's success. In a society where the responsibility for household duties and child-rearing is placed heavily on women, we are facing the question of how to rebalance it, including the promotion of paternal participation in child-rearing in the future.

The declining birthrate is an issue of a natural decline in population. The background of the natural decline is linked closely to social depopulation, where young people who are raised in local communities move out to other areas before marriage. It is necessary to organize an environment where the younger generation are born and raised in the community and can stay there to work.

On the other hand, when considering the Asian way of thinking, where importance is placed on family bonds, as a positive factor, it could benefit the efforts to solve the declining birthrate problem by young people receiving support in child-rearing through living arrangement of three generations living under one roof or living close to extended family, which allows families to have double-income, resulting in being able to have more children. I think keeping family values in the culture may closely relate to the future outlook of birthrate in Asia.



Keynote Speech

“Future of East Asia”



Shinichi Kitaoka Emeritus Professor, the University of Tokyo

First of all, I would like to point out that the East Asian region is a center of growth in the world and it will gain greater global importance if it continues to grow. In the East Asian region, there is no confusion of refugees from the Middle East and Africa like Europe is experiencing, and the region has an attribute where it is not getting directly affected by refugee problems. On the other hand, there is an issue of military tensions and a rise of nationalism in East Asia. However, if we can manage those issues properly to avoid conflicts, the development of the region is believed to further advance. Each local government will have a vital role to play for the stability in the East Asia.

In a ranking of the world's most prosperous countries, the majority of the high-ranked are small countries with a population of 10 million or less, such as Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Norway. Why has it come to an era where small countries can become prosperous? Firstly, that is because there is no large-scale war at the present time, and therefore, a size of population or land is not a necessary condition to become prosperous. Secondly, big powers carry regions with conflicting interests and so it takes a long time for them to unify and also it holds inconsistencies. On the contrary, in small countries, effectively steering the economy and agile decision-making are possible. Furthermore, things are directly tied to residents, which makes it possible to incorporate needs of each region in a direct way. These advantages of small countries can be applied to cities as well as rural areas. The twenty-first century has to be “the era of cities and rural areas.”

Nationalism could interfere with the current cooperation. The basis of nationalism is not based on regions but it is built on education based on nations. Imagined nationalism is more powerful than actual experiences. Thus, it could be an obstacle in between countries. Yet, that is less likely to occur between rural areas and between cities. Moreover, the fundamental of foreign policy is human relations. Remembering specifics of opponent's face will enable realistic foreign relations. In that sense as well, relationships between rural areas and between cities are important. Furthermore, there are many issues common to local governments. Just as mentioned during this congress, a successful problem solution by a certain local government could be a good example for other local governments in different countries. In this way, it is important that a relationship between local governments is plus-sum not zero-sum.

Problems specific to big cities in old times are now occurring in the middle of a rapid concentration of population into cities in developing countries. Development of urban infrastructure becomes the primary issue when population concentrates, such as the occurrence of traffic congestion. Once in Thailand, there were problems of traffic congestion, air pollution, energy loss, and time loss caused by human. But, these problems have been improved significantly thanks to development of a public transportation system.

JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) has been engaging in public transportation projects in Manila, the Philippines and Dhaka, Bangladesh in an effort to be of help to developing countries. Also, water shortages occur when population concentrates in cities. For instance, JICA accomplished a large-scale water supply project in Cambodia in the past, which was called “the miracle of Phnom Penh”.

JICA's duty is development support to developing countries. Here, as examples, I would like to introduce some of the projects JICA is currently working in the participating countries of today's congress. In Anhui Province, China, projects for atmospheric environment improvement, sewage treatment for water environment improvement, and urban waste treatment are in progress. And in Xi'an City, an environmental improvement project—specifically a sewage treatment project—is under way. In Indonesia, country-wide establishment of universities, a flood countermeasure project at the upper Citarum river basin in Province of West Java, operation improvement of the Indramayu Coal Fired Power Plant, and a project aimed at improving and cultivating practical nursing care skills are currently going on. To help maintain tourism resources, construction of Borobudur and Prambanan Archaeological Parks in the Province of Yogyakarta Special Region is in progress. In Malaysia, a research project concerning countermeasure against damage in disasters from landslides and floods is being conducted. A sewage treatment project for the improvement of the water environment in Hue City, Vietnam is being performed. In light of a historical affair that Buddhist monks from Central Vietnam attended a lavish consecration ceremony of the Great Buddha at Tōdai-ji temple, I hope to deepen our relationship.

Modern international cooperation is deemed to be dealing with countries but it is actually dealing with cities and municipalities. JICA has also been requesting international cooperation from Japanese local governments through its centers in Japan, and making efforts overseas with participation of not just local governments but also corporations. In this way, assistance in connecting local governments has been significantly increasing in JICA's international cooperation activities. We have been serving as a bridge connecting municipalities from the project sites and Japan, and making efforts in international cooperation together with local people.

I am hoping to lead to greater development of East Asia by further invigorating the JICA's activities, and strengthening the activities from an angle that a visible relationship between Japan and other East Asian countries will be a solution to problems that cities have in common.

Theme 1**Community and Regional Development**

Participating local and regional governments	People's Republic of China : Anhui Province, Chengdu City (Sichuan Province), Dongying City (Shandong Province) Republic of Indonesia : Province of West Java Malaysia : Melaka State Republic of Korea : Chungcheongnam-do Province, Seosan City (Chungcheongnam-do Province) Socialist Republic of Viet Nam : Thua Thien Hue Province, Hue City (Thua Thien Hue Province) Japan : Mie Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Tagajo City (Miyagi Prefecture), Kashihara City (Nara Prefecture)
Lecturer	GOTO, Kenichi CEO of Prot Asia and Pacific Inc.

Lecturer's Speech



GOTO, Kenichi CEO of Prot Asia and Pacific Inc.

What is most important in solving regional vitalization issues is not finances, but changing the awareness of the residents.

A regional appeal for residents is "convenience", but uniqueness weighs more than convenience from a tourism point of view. What we can do to showcase uniqueness was not taken into consideration in community development in the past.

The more unique a community is, the more visitors will come from far away areas. Strong uniqueness is the regional appeal itself. By enhancing the uniqueness its influence will spread to the people outside the area, which will cause them to visit the area. Voluntary creation of regional uniqueness by residents begins once they understand this concept. As you can see from

the examples of restaurants granted with Michelin Guide stars and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the more rural the community is, the more important it is to find global value in the area. By being aware of the standpoint where the community is local yet global at the same time, the residents' perception toward "what is normal" to them in the community will change.

The residents felt inferiority because there was nothing in their town. This is because they did not see the "difference" as uniqueness. But, once they recognize the fact that regional "difference" can turn into "uniqueness", they will be able to utilize the "difference", which was the source of the sense of inferiority, as "uniqueness". Facing the "sense of regional inferiority", that is, accepting the "difference" squarely and enhancing the global value in the area will lead to future growth of the area.

Community development employing regional uniqueness requires reviewing an area with the concept of "designing the space and time". Community development led by government administrators adds a constraint that funds must be equally spent, which in many cases will not allow for good utilization of the appeal of a strong sense of uniqueness. It does not mean you just have to develop uniformed physical infrastructure, but does require variation according to the uniqueness of each region. When a community is designed with a firm sense, regional residents can recognize the value of regional uniqueness and create regional pride.

In Japan, there is a tourism example which employed an old townscape that happened to be left in the area, and another example which turned a factory into industrial tourism. When the residents themselves figure out what should be preserved, or changed in their community and they utilize the resources that are available in the area to draw designs which improve the quality of time they spend, it will lead to the promotion of tourism in the region.

Disseminate the fact that there is not “nothing” but rather “something”. For instance, there is nature and beautiful snowy landscapes in winter in my hometown, Tokachi. By utilizing these facts and designing time that cannot be experienced anywhere else, I created regional appeal and increased the number of visitors.

The true treasure lies in your immediate surroundings in the community. Landscapes that you see every day, the work place and what you do there could become tourism resources. When regional residents become aware that they are at the heart of tourism, it leads to a new way of regional tourism where various people other than direct stakeholders in tourism, such as transportation facilities and hotels, come together.

From the standpoint of “enjoying an area” that allows visitors to enjoy regional landscapes and the “best season in the area” which makes the most of the best season of beautiful landscapes and by tastefully designing time and space, the community can provide valuable time that can only be enjoyed at that moment and place. This will result in more visitors taking their time to visit the area. Encouraging these elements as projects that residents take part in will link to innovative change and improvement of the residents’ cultural and awareness levels.

What rural areas really have to value is “quality” rather than “quantity”. Utilizing the “authenticity” intertwined in the daily life of the region as a resource makes it possible to continuously attract visitors. It also becomes important for government administrators to provide support so that regional residents can take proactive actions.

With this meeting where local governments from various countries in East Asia participate as an axis, I believe loosely connecting the differences and uniqueness that each community has, such as “East Asia XXX Road Project” for example, will create an overwhelmingly different worldview than before. I expect such development in the future.

Participants in Head-level Discussion



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Vice Governor

The Exchange of Opinions

1. Community development utilizing regional resources

(1) Reconsideration of unique appeals of regions (=value)

- Hue City has a number of world-class cultural heritage sites, including those tangible and intangible; we are promoting the city's tourism while protecting these cultural heritage sites. Significant money and human resources are required for the preservation of cultural heritage sites. Thus, support from all quarters, including the national government of Vietnam, is very important.

(Hue City, Vietnam)

- The local residents offer first-class hospitality to tourists, and have superior lifestyles and ethics. In addition, various historic buildings and sites are still preserving the atmosphere of the era of Portuguese rule.

(Melaka State, Malaysia)

- The Province of West Java is well-known as a beautiful province by European tourists. It is even said that "Gods smile on the beauty of the region." The province is also very valuable geologically and has over 100 different cultures. We are aiming to take advantage of these regional attributes in tourism.

(Province of West Java, Indonesia)

- We are aiming to develop a community where people can stroll through the town with the well-preserved scenery of a historic village, one where people rediscover the value of the town by learning how the town was built and how people lived in old times, and one that people can pass down to the next generation. For that reason, in Imai-cho, which is designated by the national government of Japan as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings, we have been working on the preservation and repair of traditional townhouses, which had been evolved correspondingly to the regional climate and culture, and other such buildings, as well as the conservation and improvement of landscapes while keeping the comfortable living environment.

(Kashihara City, Japan)

- Ten million people visit Ise Jingu shrine every year, and those visitors always walk through "Oharai-machi" on the way to the shrine. Oharai-machi is a town in which the townscape of the Edo Period has been rebuilt; the town welcomes visitors with hearty hospitality. And in its immediate vicinity, "Okage-yokocho" has been developed with private funding; visitors can enjoy traditional foods and souvenirs distinct to Mie Prefecture there. This is an example of a region where the development of townscape as tangible elements and the improvement of intangible elements were achieved.

(Mie Prefecture, Japan)

- In tourism development, it is important to make use of what we already have to make it better and unique rather than spending a lot of money on building something big. Our target is to offer hospitality so that tourists can be mentally recharged and not just do sightseeing.

(Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam)

(2) Integration of historical value and new value

- Melaka State has a long history. Old things will be lost when new things are built. Thus, how we bring in new elements while keeping traditional elements is crucial. On top of that, it is critical whether or not we can draw the same scenario for our shared future in this multi-ethnic country where people's cultural values are diverse.

(Melaka State, Malaysia)

- A comprehensively good sense is required to keep a good balance between old and new. That will help create a firm vision of the community, including historical matters and landscapes, and also create change without destroying the image of the community if designed based on the vision. Conversely, new elements will enhance the value of the old elements in the community.

(Lecturer, GOTO)

(3) Various approaches of community development

- To promote emigration of young people from large urban areas, we provide occasions for tourism and interaction, and then places to visit for those who think about living in Nara Prefecture, even just temporarily. In addition, we have been striving through trial and error to advertise the appeals of our prefecture as well as to build ideal environments for work and child-rearing, such as enhancing the internet environment to allow people to work in the same condition as in cities.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- In order for the cities and rural areas to share roles in proper balance, it requires people to live their lives while being engaged in both lifestyles, not just one or the other. That will work as a trick to share fun, such as enjoying a lifestyle that is available only in the city and a rural lifestyle that is available only in rural area. I think we need to raise people's awareness.
(Lecturer, GOTO)
- Local employment is vital in order to prevent out-migration of young people. More specifically, jobs just for people to make a living are not sought after. It is essential to produce places that enable people to express their own capabilities. What is important is to be able to contribute to the community where one was born, and to be able to make one's own future.
(Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam)
- No matter how small a town is there is always a place where young people gather. It is very important not only to create jobs, but also to consider how people can enjoy time after work, for example. I assume it is necessary to develop a community which strategically incorporates elements, including restaurants that serve good food and offer a fun experience or nice bars.
(Lecturer, GOTO)
- The important point is how we are going to shape our brand as a world-class cultural city, tie it into prosperity, and preserve our traditional culture.
(Anhui Province, China)
- Just as the out-migration of young people and the declining child birth are related to community development, three themes for today's discussion are all connected. It can be said that they represent all problems that the world is facing now. I believe that the problems can be solved only when these matters are addressed in a comprehensive way.
(Chungcheongnam-do Province, Korea)

2. Community development in cooperation

- In recent times, where things will not move any further if matters are dealt only in a unit of one city or one prefecture, community development by building an industry in a larger region as a whole while making full use of features of each region seems to be becoming a trend.
(Mie Prefecture, Japan)
- In Nara Prefecture, prefectural and municipal governments are working together toward resolution to issues in both tangible and intangible aspects with the "Nara model." We believe that it is important that we listen to residents' voices, and that municipal and prefectural governments move forward looking in the same direction on even ground.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- In efforts to develop a better community to live in by utilizing regional resources, prefectural and municipal governments made partnership agreements; we plan together from a phase of drawing concepts, and conduct projects in concert at stations and shrines as the center of activities. For instance, in Yamatokoriyama City, based on a partnership agreement, the creation of a vital space in front of the station is going forward with the concept of "Community Development for Active Life" which utilizes local attractions and regional resources.
(Nara Prefectural Assembly, Japan)
- Dazaifu City, a friendship city of Tagajo City, is in historical friendly relations with Buyeo County in Korea. People shipped out of Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture went all the way to Korea to fight in the Battle of Baekgang. Likewise, an accumulation of history exists in various forms in East Asia. These sorts of connections through historical relations would be an interesting topic for community development.
(Tagajo City, Japan)

- We, together with a few other neighboring municipalities, requested the national government to introduce plate numbers with local name of “Asuka” as our local vehicle plate number to promote regional development. However, we were unable to gain approval from all neighboring municipalities because each municipality has a long history and culture. This incident was recognized as a problem where partnerships sometimes do not work well for the sake of obsessions within each region.

(Kashihara City, Japan)

3. Awareness-raising of local residents

- How we are going to restore the sense of collective community in local residents, and how we are going to motivate the residents to have the determination to “build a community full of tourism resources” are very important tasks.

(Chungcheongnam-do Province, Korea)

- Awareness-raising of residents is vital for the promotion of community development. It is important that people in top positions set a strategic direction and get residents' focuses all pointed in the same direction. The awareness-raising of residents has been working well so far. We will advance community development further by utilizing our potential.

(Hue City, Vietnam)

- To tackle a population decrease, it is necessary to promote the attraction of companies in order to create jobs. At the same time, it is necessary to enhance the appeals of the community, and move forward with community development utilizing the individuality of the community. We recognize that our next challenge is to listen to voices of local residents, and construct a system making the local residents the main figures.

In the past, community development was carried out through rejuvenating communities with a lot of money. However, a community that was built with money would inevitably become decrepit, and it would require more money. On the other hand, if local people are re-energized, people will develop and the community development will continue. We heard such opinion during conversations with local residents.

(Nara Prefectural Assembly, Japan)

- Our target is to achieve community development that cherishes nature, takes advantage of local resources, and goes with the flow of nature. But the most important thing in community development is “human.” We respect the will of local people, and we are taking time to have numerous discussions with residents.

(Chengdu City, China)

4. Importance of environmental protection in community development

- There is Garorim Bay, one of the five biggest polders in the world, in Seosan City, and it is designated as a national marine conservation area. Working together with fishermen, we are promoting the 6th industrialization of fishery, combining tourism while placing the main emphasis on conservation of the region rather than development in an effort to increase the income of fishermen.

(Seosan City, Korea)

- Development of the fishing industry is advancing with no plan, so that the change in water environment is significant. To solve the issue, we are making efforts to maintain an adequate level of water quality. By having local residents take control as much as possible in the water quality management, we aim to lead our efforts in the protection of nature.

(Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam)

- In tourism and community development, an environmental perspective is often forgotten, but that is actually the most critical topic. Proactive measures against the pollution of air, water, and soil are the challenges we are facing. In Chungcheongnam-do Province, we are planning to allocate the budget as needed to improve air quality and protect the environment, then make use of the environment as a tourism resource.

(Chungcheongnam-do Province, Korea)

- There are a lot of water sources in Province of West Java, yet, we have the problem of what we should do to ensure the water quality for drinking. Additionally, in the Citarum River, a drinking water source and the longest river in West Java, pollution is increasing because residents dump waste into the river. Since environmental issues directly link to human living, those are important subjects in terms of community development.

(Province of West Java, Indonesia)

- Dongying City only has a short history. But, based on our motto of “coexistence of city and nature,” we are implementing community development that blends city and wetlands adequately while protecting wetlands in nearby areas. Today, the proportion of forest area in the urban area is high and a number of rare birds fly into the city. Furthermore, we decentralized city functions and addressed environmental problems by installing an eco-area in the center of the city. We will continue to promote a community development plan well-blended with nature.

(Dongying City, China)

- Environmental matters such as countermeasures for air pollution caused by fine particles should be dealt with globally.

(Seosan City, Korea)



Summary



GOTO, Kenichi CEO of Prot Asia and Pacific Inc.

How we can utilize difference is most important. It will only create competition if the community tries to utilize the same thing as other communities, which will create winning or losing, or superior or inferior relationships. Recognizing the difference between your own community and other communities and “opening up and connecting” will create lateral relationships to enhance the appeals of the community. Strategically connecting the difference with other communities is extremely important in community development.

Community development tends to be too serious as people make serious efforts, but people willingly spend time and money for fun things. I believe fun elements need to be proactively added in community development.

People do not take proper care of a place that is irrelevant to them. Conversely, they will if the place is relevant to them. If that was the case, we should think how we can make people feel close to natural landscapes, including parks and public places, as a place relevant to them. Expanding meaningful places for everyone by letting them enjoy the mountains and rivers and have fun—it is necessary for administrative offices to provide the foundation for that and it is also necessary for the private sector to cooperate to create a community where many people can enjoy interactions.

There are five steps in community development: “know, see, touch, feel and connect”. In order to “connect”, at the fifth step, “people” play the most important role. Preparation of a place for community members to participate as players will require public-private partnerships.

Japan is considered a developed country with new problems and has had various experiences, such as solving environmental issues. Once the wisdom of and the growing energy from the East Asian regional governments are added, I feel we will be able to develop communities from a new point of view. I also believe that ideal, fulfilling community development will become possible in each area of East Asia.

Lastly, you have visited Nara many times by now and built relationships with the people of Nara, including the Governor. I am sure that Nara has already become a place that you are proud of. If we could build relationships among the East Asian regional governments in which we can take pride in each other's region as our own, a new, truly fulfilling community development model will be created.



Theme 2

Agriculture and Regional Economic Development

Participating local and regional governments	People's Republic of China : Suzhou City (Anhui Province)
	Republic of Korea : Gongju City (Chungcheongnam-do Province)
	Socialist Republic of Viet Nam : Phu Tho Province
	Japan : Nagano Prefecture, Shimane Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Niigata City (Niigata Prefecture), Nara City (Nara Prefecture), Gose City (Nara Prefecture), Asuka Village (Nara Prefecture), Koryo Town (Nara Prefecture)
Lecturer	MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Senior Economist, the Japan Research Institute, Ltd.

Lecturer's Speech



MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Senior Economist, the Japan Research Institute, Ltd.

When taking a look at the position of agriculture in Japan's economy by GDP, it used to constitute 50 percent seventy years ago, but now it holds only 1 percent with the advancement of industrialization. We can no longer call Japan an agrarian country. At present, the majority of Japan's exports are cars, electronics, machines, etc., mostly factory-manufactured products. Agricultural products make up only 0.6 percent. Industrialization is rapidly progressing in China as well. China might be in the same situation as Japan in the future.

Japan is a manufacturing country for sure. As a matter of fact, it is better suited for agriculture than some other countries in the world because it has fertile soil thanks to its relatively new volcanic mountains and also it rains a lot. Japan's agriculture sales for the year before last totaled 8.4 trillion yen, and there were 1.92 million people who engaged in farming. When compared to Toyota Motor Corporation for example, who has 11.2 trillion yen sales just with one company and employs 70 thousand employees, some might think agriculture is doubtful as an industry because it is low in productivity and individual revenue. However, it also can be said that because this industry that can employ so many people despite the extremely low sales still carries on, it provides jobs in all over Japan. Presumably, as is the case with Korea, almost all farmers in Japan are independent farmers; they keep their living expenses low by consuming farmed goods they grow on their own, and many of them live a healthy life.

Seventeen percent of workers who are 65 years old or older in Japan are engaged in farming. But in Nara Prefecture, it makes up forty percent. There are opinions that they should not work so hard. But in fact, they lead their lives by enjoying farming to grow what they eat and sometimes taking their produce to market to earn some money. Two-thirds of the land in Japan is mountainous, but in Nara, eighty percent is mountainous. It may sound quite tight, but empty land will increase because the country's population begins to decline from now on. As far as we can see in the population forecast reported by the United Nations, China and Vietnam will experience this phenomenon in twenty to fifty years. That makes me think that we should instead expand forest areas and farmland, since we will have more superfluous land if we wipe out farmland and give up farming. The productive-age population in Japan has come down to the 70 million range from 87 million at its prime, and it is expected to continue to decrease by about one percent. Nonetheless, it is expected that the size of the economy per capita will grow by one percent every year, thus the time when "the country of Japan dies down" will never come. In other words, each individual is becoming prosperous though only gradually. However, the economic growth for the country as a whole will end due to decline in population, so we must think about agriculture in consideration of the situation where a surplus of land already exists. It is forecasted that aging of society and falling population will hit China, too, before long on a different scale from Japan. Korea and Vietnam will, in all probability, follow the same path at around the

same time as this hits China. Other countries in East Asia will go down the same path as Japan as a result of their economic development; I hope that they will make use of Japan's experience.

When considering Japan's agriculture in view of the present population decline, restoring rich land to improve self-sufficiency is preferred, rather than developing land continuously. But in reality, as many farmers are elderly people, their farm sales are few, and the proportion of their products in GDP is very small. How should we protect agriculture under these circumstances? This is when a combination of the primary (agriculture), the secondary (manufacturing), and the tertiary (services), the so-called the sixth industry, becomes important. More specifically, it includes efforts to improve the quality of farmed goods and put high added-value on the products by on-farm processing with advanced technology as well as by developing local branding to sell them for higher prices.

For instance, there are farm producers selling their farmed goods and processed products directly to end customers at farmers' markets, farm stay programs offering tourists farm work experiences, and farmers running farmers' restaurants that they own using local ingredients. They manage to protect their farmlands by increasing farm income. Here is another example; elderly farmers bring their farmed vegetables to a welfare institution, where they are used to prepare reasonable and tasty lunch boxes at the institution to sell to elderly people. But, vouchers to be used for the institution are given out instead of paying money for the vegetables that the farmers bring in. In other cases, efforts are undertaken to preserve farmlands on public housing complex grounds to be used as residents' farm gardens and also make use of agriculture in city residents' lives, such as village forest style housing.

As I just described, the sales of agriculture may be small in amount but agriculture has multifaceted functions and great potential through cooperation with cities.

Participants in Head-level Discussion



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The Exchange of Opinions

1. Efforts to Address Regional Issues by Utilizing Agriculture

(1) Revitalization of Agriculture by Utilizing Local Specialties

- Gongju City, an urban-rural complex city, is experiencing a sharp population decline. In rural communities, as the decline in the number and the aging of farming families continue, we are implementing initiatives to promote the “sixth industry” by utilizing chestnuts, a specialty of the city. These include the development of chestnut makgeolli, which is popular among women, and “chestnut beef” by using tannin-rich chestnut’s astringent skin as cow feed. In addition to providing education on the processing industry to help develop agricultural and forestry products, we are looking to new areas, such as mushroom production. Meanwhile, we are also seeing limitations due to the aging of the population.
(Gongju City, Korea)

- Currently, the shifting away from farming in young people is a serious problem. Vietnam's agriculture is characteristically small-scale agricultural production on dispersed patches of lands, but going forward, we would like to promote large-scale agricultural production and processing of tea and other specialties, and also focus on exporting, as well as on sales to major cities. Furthermore, we would like to attract investment from Japan and other countries to promote exports of agricultural products including eggs.

(Phu Tho Province, Vietnam)

(2) Development of Agriculture by Utilizing Local Brand

- The unified brand “Oishii Shinshu food (delicious food (fudo, or climate)” of the Shinshu region) started from questioning whether the local people understand the excellence of their local specialties. We launched this branding initiative with the idea that explaining in a story style how wonderful our food that is born from our fudo, or local climate and natural features, is will help expand our brand across the country. Recognition of the brand in Nagano prefecture is still low at 66%. Going forward, we would like not only to continue to disseminate the brand nationwide, but also to raise brand awareness in the prefecture.

(Nagano Prefecture, Japan)

- Gose City introduced the iron-making technology from Korea in ancient times and the local ruling families created high-technology towns in the city. The city offers a scenery of terraced rice fields also seen in Shimane Prefecture. Also, there is Kongo San Mountain, which has a close relationship with Korea. We are examining ways to utilize the potential of these local features to link with agriculture in the form of a local brand.

(Gose City, Japan)

- Since the introduction of the Nagano Appellation Control System in accordance with the French wine controlling system, many excellent wines branded as “Oishii Shinshu food (fudo)” have been produced.

(Nagano Prefecture, Japan)

(3) Strategy to Expand Sales Channels and Promote Consumption

- We are working to maximize purchasing power of the people of Nara City and to make it a factor in supporting agriculture. In addition, we are planning to provide lunch at every junior high school with rice produced in the city. We are also putting a focus on setting up farmers' markets and mobile shops to help people buy local agricultural products on a daily basis.

(Nara City, Japan)

- There are three farmers' markets in Asuka Village and the fourth processing facility was newly opened. The “Asuka Yume Hambaisho” farmers' market, the first of such markets, is small in size but its sales amounts to about 300 million yen, with almost all farmers in the village participating in the market. Over half of the gross value of agricultural production of Asuka Village comes from sales at the farmers' markets. Furthermore, the establishment of a processing facility next to some of the markets has enabled such markets to process agricultural products, sell the processed products and offer food at the same time. The markets are planned by the public sector and operated by the private sector, and this system is working well.

(Asuka Village, Japan)

- As the Tokyo market determines the quality and price of food products in Japan, we do marketing in Tokyo by establishing an “antenna shop (specialties shop)” and an “antenna (specialties) restaurant”, and offering appealing foods from Nara to gourmets in Tokyo in our bid to raise their reputation in Tokyo. Competing in Tokyo also gives market reactions directly to producers. At farmer's markets in Nara Prefecture, meanwhile, products' prices are scrutinized directly by consumers' palates, and products that are judged not tasty for the price are left unbought. As these show, the purpose of the prefecture is to offer opportunities for producers to market their farmed goods directly to consumers, but at the same time, we are feeling producers' marketing sense is also improving.

(Nara Prefecture, Japan)

- We are working on “local consumption, local product,” a notion from the consumer side, to shift as many ingredients that are sourced from outside the prefecture and consumed in the prefecture to locally-produced ingredients as we can. We are promoting the consumption of local products at hotels and restaurants. Also, as most ingredients of the sixth industry-related products, such as those for pickles and miso pastes, are imported, we are aiming to replace those imported ingredients to local ones and develop the large-scale sixth industry through tie-ups with companies.

(Nagano Prefecture, Japan)

(4) Rural Area Development Through Cross-industrial Collaboration

- We successfully opened three farmer's restaurants on farmlands utilizing the relaxed regulations in agricultural strategic special zones. We will make use of these farmer's restaurants, plant factories, and agri-parks to develop a region that can win in the area of gastronomic (food culture) tourism.

(Niigata City, Japan)

- It has long been said that tourism in Nara does not come with attractiveness in food. Yet, we are now promoting the branding of foods and tourism that convey the attractiveness of foods from Nara. For example, we collaborate with the tourism association to organize tours and develop products that convey the attractiveness of foods, such as offering opportunities for tea-leaf picking work experience in rural areas and for visiting restaurants that offer foods made using local agricultural products.

(Nara City, Japan)

- The farm stay program launched in 2013 offers tourists the opportunity of staying at a farmhouse, and cooking and eating together. This is a small and simple activity, but foreign tourists are impressed with what they experienced and they now make up half of the program participants. We have also turned a private house into a guest house, where tourists can experience farm works and eat foods from Asuka Village. For foreign tourists, Asuka Village agriculture seems to be very interesting.

(Asuka Village, Japan)

- Local production for local consumption only cannot boost growth. We need to distribute food ingredients to farther and wider areas in order to develop a diverse, wealthy diet and food culture. To sell food products in far-away places, not only processing skills but also a safety and approval system is necessary. It is true that only major cities draw a wide variety of food ingredients in, but we believe that the very rural area that produce foods should enrich their diet. To this end, collaboration with tourism and other industry is necessary.

(Nara Prefecture, Japan)

(5) Support for Engaging in Agriculture Utilizing Regional Characteristics

- Gose City, a city of scenic beauty overlooking the Nara Bonchi basin, is recently beginning to attract young people from outside the city to start farming. Utilizing proximity to major cities, we are developing a network in various ways, such as inviting young people to one-day farming work experience. With the cooperation from people from outside the city, we were able to take the first step forward.

(Gose City, Japan)

- At agriculture school, we are encouraging trainees to try to make the farming business profitable, and this is leading young people to enter farming. Also, as the town's socks manufacturing industry, which boasts the Japan's largest production volume, is facing a lack of successors as the agriculture industry is, we are working on how we can link these two different industries to create a new business, while also utilizing vacant houses. In our bid to create a new tourism strawberry field at Umami Hill Park, which welcomes more than 1 million visitors a year, we encourage young farmers to participate in the project.

(Koryo Town, Japan)

2. New Initiatives Toward the Realization of Sustainable Agriculture

- As the pace of aging of farmers' population is one of the fastest in Japan, we have begun promoting the sixth industry and branding from an earlier stage. As the aging further advances, in order to sustain the agriculture industry, we encourage farmers' organizations to establish a larger organization through village-community collaboration aimed at production efficiency improvements, cost reduction, management diversification, and multi-faceted development of new sixth industry products, in a bid to make agriculture sustainable.

(Shimane Prefecture, Japan)

- The Nara Food Festival “C’festa” was held again this year at Nara Park, drawing more visitors every year. The event aims to increase consumption by those visiting Nara Prefecture, and encourage local people to enjoy local foods. Furthermore, with the opening of “Nara Agriculture and Food International College (NAFIC)” this year, we expect graduates to open a new farmer’s restaurant. As agriculture is a vulnerable industry, governments need to actively and stably support it.

(Nara Prefectural Assembly, Japan)

- The region focusing on agriculture is also a region lagging behind in industrialization. Income levels are relatively low, and young people who received education in such a region leave to go to urban areas. This is how the farming population loses the young generation and ages, resulting in the rise in social security costs. This is a challenge common not only to Asian countries but also to Western countries.

(Nara Prefecture, Japan)

- In the 20th century, a food valley, a home to the food industry, was established, and many confectionery and rice cracker makers, cooked rice makers, and others were born in the valley and grew to become Japan’s major companies. Now, we are restructuring the area as a new food valley to create an agri-cluster (a hybrid industry-academia-government organization for food and agriculture). Currently, the new valley is designated as an agricultural strategic special zone, and the nine corporate groups that have entered the agriculture industry by utilizing the relaxed regulations are rolling out their unique activities, which are leading to the development of the sixth industry.

(Niigata Prefecture, Japan)

- We are exploring ways to promote agriculture by combining “welfare and agriculture,” and “education and agriculture.”

(Gose City, Japan)

- We are working to develop the 12th industry, in addition to the sixth industry, to maximize the power of farmland resources in the following six areas: (1) education (food education through provision of school lunch with cooked rice using rice grown in Niigata and farm work experiences); (2) child-raising (initiative of growing vegetables at kindergartens by using home food waste as fertilizer); (3) welfare (employing of people with disabilities in the agricultural special zone); (4) health and medical care (promotion of healthy food using local food ingredients, and promotion of mental well-being through farm works); (5) energy and environment (utilization of rice husks as fuel and fertilizer); and (6) exchanges (promotion of tourism using Japan’s first bus-turned-restaurant, etc.). We are still in the development stage, but will continue working to promote the 12th industry that fully utilizes farmland resources in the 12 factors.

(Niigata City, Japan)

3. Potential of Policy Development through Intra-local Government Cooperation

- Gongju City’s specialty, chestnuts are used in a variety of processed food, such as chestnut makgeolli, bread, and sweets. But they are all produced in small-scale and are unfortunately not established as an industry. Going forward, we think that supporting on central- and local government levels after this congress meeting will help these food processing sectors grow into an industry, globalize, and become more popular.

(Gongju City, Korea)

- Suzhou City boasts some of UNESCO’s world cultural heritage sites, including the Grand Canal and the Garden of Cultivation. By participating in this congress and deepening exchanges with other local governments, we would like to take further action for mutual growth.

(Suzhou City, China)

- We believe that, if we are able to identify common challenges through discussions at this congress and formulate cooperative or collaborative measures with a common goal, we can make this congress more productive.

(Nara Prefecture, Japan)

- As all participating local governments, prefectures, and municipalities are working hard in the area of agriculture at their respective levels, we thought that more cooperation is necessary.

(Nara Prefectural Assembly, Japan)

- What can be a cooperation model for East Asian local governments? For instance, as we do not know the products each region is proud of until we try and eat them, if there is an event such as an “East Asia food festival,” or a project under which local governments come and work together, the environment for collaboration will be nurtured. An event in Nara Prefecture would be easier for Japanese local governments to take part in. Local governments from other countries would also be able to participate in such an event because there are their specialty food ingredients and cuisine already available in Japan, and there are sales companies handling such specialties.

(Nara Prefecture, Japan)

- In light of the characteristic of Nara Prefecture, I propose an event to hold, “a food festival of only old capital cities” on a theme of traditional cooking ingredients and methods. With cooperation from local governments in East Asia, not only people affiliated with governments but also people engaged in local agriculture and food industry as well as people from the private sector gather around, and have discussions on actual cooking methods and create an opportunity for tasting. It will be an interesting event.

(Lecturer, MOTANI)



Summary



MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Senior Economist, the Japan Research Institute, Ltd.

Our common challenge is how we are going to resolve issues in the whole region while taking advantage of agriculture.

First of all, an important point is how a region can earn foreign currency from selling locally produced agricultural goods to raise farm producers' revenues. Even with a large-scale grain producing region yielding a great production value, if its per capita income is low, extra efforts must be taken to raise revenues.

Secondly, the ability to circulate the earned money locally is crucial. Even when a region is earning foreign currency, in many cases, the earned money is put into a bank account without being spent in local consumption, or is circulated back to other regions as payments for the cost of raw materials. And again, if local people purchase only goods produced in other regions, the earned money will flow out to other regions. One example of initiatives to increase money that circulates locally is "local production for local consumption." Use one's own products to spend in one's own region while selling one's own products to other regions, though it may sound conflicted. But it is important to strategically draw visiting tourists and local kids into eating locally produced foods to remember the taste of local food. There were presentations by some participating local governments during this congress on ideas for how to offer local products to tourists and ways to use locally produced food ingredients in school lunches.

In regions where intense efforts to encourage its people to cherish their local area are being made primarily, populations tend to not go down, and also economies tends to grow.



Theme 3**Promotion of Measures against Declining Birthrate**

Participating local and regional governments	People's Republic of China : Xi'an City (Shaanxi Province)
	Republic of Indonesia : Province of Yogyakarta Special Region
Lecturer	Republic of Korea : Gyeonggi-do Province, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province
	Japan : Fukushima Prefecture, Yamanashi Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture, Tokushima Prefecture, Kagawa Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Tenri City (Nara Prefecture), Ikaruga Town (Nara Prefecture)

Lecturer's Speech

**MATSUDA, Shigeki**

Professor at Faculty of Contemporary Sociology, Chukyo University

When looking at the progress of the total fertility rate in East Asian countries, it is falling very quickly in Japan and other countries as well. This is a common problem in Asia and we need to take actions against it together.

Europe experienced this issue of declining birthrate before Asia did. Unlike Europe, the declining birthrate in Asia developed in a very short time period. In Europe, after a rapid decline of birthrate, the non-marriage rate went up and the number of children born outside of marriage increased, and these made various changes to family configurations. Now, "the second demographic transition" is being discussed. Meanwhile in Asia, fewer people go through cohabitation; people generally get married first and have children. Naturally, children born outside of marriage are fewer in Asia. In this way, when the number of young people getting married drops, it links

directly to a decrease in birthrate. This is the unique situation of Asia. The increasing non-marriage rate is the direct cause of the declining birthrate.

In analyses of the number of children, the number of children people want to have is the same in Asian and Western countries. Although, in Japan and in Korea, the number of children people think they can have in reality is fewer for reasons such as "it takes too much money for child-rearing and education", "themselves or their partner is old", and "lack of work environment where they can raise children while working."

Negative impacts caused by the declining birthrate include a decline in the workforce, a difficulty to maintain the social security system, a weakened influence of young people through voting, a decline in mutual assistance in the community, and diminished community power. In my opinion, a recovery of the number of births and the birthrate is the only solution for these problems, even if it will take a long time.

The declining birthrate in Japan was mostly caused by the tendency to stay unmarried. If the declining birth rate since the 1970's is taken as 100%, it has been analyzed that 90% were affected by non-marriage. The reasons why young people in Japan have come to choose not to get married are increased numbers of non-regular employees in young people, diminished desire to get married resulting from employment issues such as stagnant wage growth or wage inequality, and the problem of "no chances to encounter an adequate partner."

Next, when looking at the gender roles in married couples, in many Asian countries including Japan, gender roles where "husbands work and wives do all the housework and child-rearing" still remain deeply rooted in society. The married women's job continuity rate had been steadily around 25% until about 5 years ago. This reveals that countermeasures including child-raising support and work-life balance promotion were aimed at general workers, and they were not aimed at full-time homemaker wives (including temporary full-time homemakers). The current upturn of women's job continuity rate is resulted from the fact that more women are able to keep their jobs due to the mandatory implementation of the short-time work system creating more time for child-rearing. More than half of those women were full-time homemakers at some point at least. Strengthening support to at-home child-rearing for full-time homemaker wives in order for them to feel easy about having second and subsequent children will lead to a rise in the overall

birthrate. In addition, assistance in resolving issues around delayed marriage and infertility is required.

One of the factors of regional differences in the declining birthrate is employment. The birthrate in municipalities where the total unemployment rate is low and where young people can get a stable job instead of a non-regular employment is clearly high. The second factor is daycare centers. Especially in the Tokyo metropolitan area as well as Kinki and Osaka regions, there are insufficient daycare facilities. Third is whether child-rearing support from parents and/or grandparents is available. Fourth is if there is a local culture to place value on marriage and child-raising.

Currently, the Japanese government sets the target birthrate as 1.8, and has been making efforts to resolve the issue of declining birthrate. As for measures against the trend of non-marriage, employment support for young people and marriage support are important. As for measures for children waiting to enter a childcare center, the Tokyo metropolitan area should receive prioritized attention, and a different approach should be taken for other regions. It is also necessary to alleviate the cost burden for child-raising and education, as well as to establish an appropriate balance in the cost burden between the public and childcare users.

Lastly, as lessons learned from the cases in Japan, I would like to mention four key points regarding measures against the declining birthrate in East Asia. First, actions against the trends of non-marriage and delayed marriage are needed, in particular, employment measures and marriage support for young people. Second, a relief in the expanding cost burden for education. The ratio of students who advance to college is quickly rising in Asian countries, and so the burden of educational cost on household is increasing. Third, support for women working while raising children. When considering means of providing childcare services, utilizing the power of kinship can be a possible means in countries where people hold close kinship ties. Fourth, when the concentration of the population into large cities advances, the birthrate in large cities will get drastically lower and it may become impossible to break away from the state of declining birthrate. As the concentration of the population into large cities is already happening in Asia, how to vitalize rural areas in each country will be the fundamental question.

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The Exchange of Opinions

1. Background of Declining Birthrate and Current Situation of Declining Population

- After the first postwar baby boom, the government implemented a population control policy. In the background of this policy, there was the recognition that people cannot live in prosperity when the population becomes too large. Consequently, the birthrate became low. And despite the declining number of births, a change in the policy to stimulate the birthrate was delayed. The same is happening in Korea and Singapore.

(Lecturer, MATSUDA)

- The Province of Yogyakarta Special Region is home to institutions of higher education, and a large number of university graduates live in the region. Unfortunately, however, the province is not an industrialized area, and most of them leave the region to live in major cities.

(Province of Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia)

- There are only a few universities in Kagawa Prefecture, and 80% of those who go to university leave the prefecture, resulting in a rapid decline in the population of those in their 20's. As a climate of choosing universities outside the prefecture still remains, it is necessary to make universities in Kagawa more attractive.

(Kagawa Prefecture, Japan)

- In China, the problem is that the long-years of the one-child policy has influenced the country's social recognition, and the number of children people want to have is declining. Also, as the current challenge of 250 million people moving to urban areas is simultaneously coupled with population aging and birthrate declines, the government is urged to take new action.

(Xi'an City, China)

- The fundamental issue of declining birthrates lies in unstable employment, expensive education, expensive marriage, as well as a negative perception in society about raising children while working.

(Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Korea)

- In Korea, the economic burden for education at cram schools and other institutions is heavy. The desire to advance to university is also very high, leading to issues surrounding women with higher levels of education in particular, such as delayed marriage to build their post-graduate careers and hesitation in having children. We would like to find a comprehensive solution to untangle this complicatedly intertwined issue.

(Gyeonggi-do Province, Korea)

- In Nara Prefecture, population is concentrated in the northern area, which has good access to Osaka and other cities, while the southern area is facing advanced depopulation. It is also important to resolve the issue of regional disparities such as this.

(Nara Prefectural Assembly, Japan)

2. Initiatives to Address Declining Birthrate

(1) Marriage Support and Fostering a Momentum Toward Marriage

- Tokushima Prefecture designated the year 2016 as the "First Year of the Enhancement of Marriage Support," and recruited supporters who work as facilitators. Under this support system, the "Tokushima Marriage Support Center" was opened with the function of facilitating one-on-one matchmaking based on the results of searching a database of registered support users who want to marry but cannot find a partner.

(Tokushima Prefecture, Japan)

- We are working to convey the message that marrying and having children is wonderful and that child-raising is a socially fundamental and respectable work. Working with the Board of Education, we are also implementing various initiatives, such as holding a tanka poem contest, "Ai no Uta (song of love)," to appeal to high-school students as well.

(Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan)

(2) Various Measures Toward Facilitating Employment

- If younger generations become parents without a stable income base, the financial burden of welfare spending on the municipal government could become heavy. Thus, it is very important to take actions in employment support concurrently.

(Lecturer, Mr. MATSUDA)

- A branch office of the Hello Work (employment support center) is established in the City Hall to cooperate with city's office for employment support. The aim is to promote support for the building and establishing of career through various ways, such as surveying employment needs and matching human resources, sharing information with the university in the city, and providing companies with information about the work environments that young people find attractive.

(Tenri City, Japan)

- Nara Prefecture's ratio of people working outside the prefecture is the highest in Japan. We are therefore proactively working to attract companies that create jobs. Also, we have our own free employment support centers in place to conduct fine-tuned matching of companies with young job seekers. Furthermore, the prefecture runs a vocational school and promotes practical education to support working within the prefecture.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- There is mismatching between the local companies wishing to employ local graduates and the local students leaving to work in Tokyo. The prefecture, therefore, holds matching fairs and other events by acting as an intermediary or through collaboration. To reduce the number of young people moving out of the prefecture, we are examining subsidizing train fees as part of the promotion of commuting to Tokyo from the prefecture.
(Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan)
- To disseminate information of local excellent SMEs to those who have gone to university outside the prefecture, we are working with local companies to raise awareness of them.
(Kagawa Prefecture, Japan)
- We proactively certify "family-friendly corporations" that are supportive of having children and raising children, and provide the certified corporations with financial, tax, and other incentives. These corporations are publicized about their certification status online, and, by informing about excellent companies as these to young people, we are working to eliminate mismatching between local SMEs and young people seeking employment.
(Gyeonggi-do Province, Korea)

(3) Various Initiatives to Enhance Childcare Service

- As seen in the world's trend, especially in Northern Europe, an ideal child-raising is to minimize the occasions to send children to a daycare center, and raise children at home as much as possible by taking as many parental leaves as possible while children are still small, then gradually shifting to a group childcare. At the same time, it is essential to create an environment so as not to interfere with employees' return to work.
(Lecturer MATSUDA)
- As part of the measures against declining birthrate, we will implement support for families with more than one child and develop an environment capable of accommodating varying work styles by providing extended child care and child care services on holidays. Going forward, we will also aim to enhance after-school care for children.
(Ikaruga Town, Japan)
- To support nursery teachers in improving their career prospects and settling as nursery staff, we have introduced a training program since fiscal year 2015, which offers three-step courses according to the number of years of work experience. We believe that the role played by daycare centers in pre-school education, including personal development, is important. Thus, in addition to the training programs just described, in order to promote appropriate handling of daycare centers as an educational institution, we are considering certifying nursery teachers who have also advanced skills built on education.
(Nara Prefecture, Japan)
- An American research report stated that preschool education influences children's motivation to learn in their later life. Childcare centers are required to enrich their educational programs, not just childminding. The Japanese Ministry of Education also understands this as a task to work on.
(Lecturer, MATSUDA)

(4) Facilitation of Cooperation with Companies Toward Support for Child-raising

- Through the cooperation with the four business organizations and under the recognition that supporting child-raising can help enhance corporate images, we are working on initiatives, such as the publishing of "Kodakara Ritsu (an estimated number of children employees will have during their employment at the company)" as an indicator of child-raising-friendly corporate environments, the system of awarding a company that has an understanding of work-life balance by the governor, and the system of recognizing "Iku-Boss" to create an environment where the entire company shows an understanding about child-raising while working.
(Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan)

- As part of work style reforms, Tenri City is promoting tele-working, a style of working without being constrained by time and place by utilizing ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and established shared offices in the city. Tele-working cases indicate that such work style helps women expecting a child continue working, and reduces time spent for commuting while increasing time to be with their family. Going forward, it would be necessary for local governments to be involved in new work styles like tele-working.

(Tenri City, Japan)

- To raise birthrates, we have clearly defined the right of maternity leave in the law, and added 60 more days to the 98-day maternity leave period.

(Xi'an City, China)

(5) Initiatives Toward Fostering Love of Family and Love of Hometown

- Gyeongsangbuk-do Province is putting its efforts in personal development education. To this end, under the theme of "family community," we have set up a system under which grandparents live with their grandchildren, and are promoting a program of inviting retired grandparents to daycare centers to play with their grandchildren. Children who were brought up with affection from their grandparents are highly positively influenced from such love as a person.

(Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Korea)

- China has traditionally emphasized the role played by family. Against the backdrop of a changing sense of happiness, to help particularly the first child build his or her values, we are working closely with local community to help healthy mental development of young people and nurture responsible sense of good family.

(Xi'an City, China)

- Fukushima Prefecture is currently at the stage of reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake. Universities and junior colleges are jointly working on an education program to foster human resources who continue living in the local community and support reconstruction works. The program offers students with opportunity of learning more about their local community and seeing it in a new light.

(Fukushima Prefecture, Japan)

- As part of the initiative to change the perception of young people, we are considering offering opportunities of learning in advance about marriage, family, child-raising, and child-birth. These include the establishment of a new general education course on love of family at universities, and the launch of education on importance of family at primary, junior-high, and high schools.

(Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Korea)

3. Outlook of Future Measures Against Declining Birthrate

(1) Promotion of Measures Against Declining Birthrate in Light of Regional Revitalization

- The first step toward the regional revitalization is that people living in the prefecture rediscover and recognize anew the values the region has to offer. It is also important that local people live with pride and love toward their local community, convey the local values to the younger generations while also disseminating such values to outside of the prefecture. We believe that this step is necessary to address declining birthrates.

(Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan)

(2) Necessity of the Promotion of Comprehensive Measures

- Looking at obstacles to implementing measures against declining birthrate, there are issues overlapping those discussed under other themes, such as how we can improve local employment, reduce population outflows, and uncover local attractiveness. Working in one area, such as in the area of social welfare, or child-raising, will no longer lead to a solution. In order to grow in a sustainable way, we need to address these issues using the general, cross-thematic approach.

(Tenri City, Japan)

- There are gaps between regular workers and non-regular workers, and also between large companies and SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), in, for instance, the childcare leave system. In formulating future measures, it will become more important to fill such gaps.

(Ikaruga Town, Japan)

- This meeting was a good opportunity to reaffirm that attracting companies is an important measure that not only increases tax income, but also creates jobs for the young generation, leading to their marriage and having children.

It is important that prefectures do not work on a top-down basis, but instead bring up ideas of each city, town, and village on a bottom-up basis. Also important is how prefectures follow up these ideas. By making the most of the “Nara Model,” under which the prefecture and municipalities link to each other to implement projects, we would like to gather together to explore ways to address the population problem associated with declining birthrates.

(Nara Prefectural Assembly, Japan)

- We felt that the local power of policy and the comprehensive local power involving people of the prefecture and municipalities are put to the test in addressing declining birthrates.

(Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan)

(3) Toward the Implementation of Measures Tailored to the Local Realities

- The role played by municipalities is important in implementing measures such as support for child-raising. With the recognition that the support measures for child-raising municipalities implement increase their value, the prefecture supports these municipalities with subsidies that they can use with less restrictions.

(Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan)

- Every participating local government is implementing measures that are basically the same. Each region has its characteristics, however, and the ways governments coordinate and customize their individual measures to their region's characteristics will be helpful for us.

(Fukushima Prefecture, Japan)

- Declining birthrate is directly connected to the issue of the natural decline in population, but is also closely relating to social shrinkage and the concept of the population participating in exchanges, such as tourism. Priorities to be placed on measures and the strategy to be employed should be decided by each municipality by taking its capability, culture and history into consideration.

(Kagawa Prefecture, Japan)

Summary



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There were two viewpoints regarding support for marriage of younger generations, that is, for those in the initial phase of building a family. The first point was the employment issue to secure working opportunities for younger generations in their local communities. In the present circumstances, where industry's structural problem exists and the ratio of college graduates is increasing, it is not an issue that can be always solved by efforts of one municipal government. This is an issue also relating to the national government's industrial policy and educational policy.

The second point was marriage support. I was surprised to learn that a similar type of marriage support has been implemented in Korea because I had thought this kind of support activities were unique to Japan. As a unique cultural concept in Asia, people's inclination to have children after marriage is deeply seated; it was recognized as a common issue in Asia.

The support activities in the childcare stage are related to municipalities. Actions must be taken as a whole against declining birthrate as well as issues about ways of working such as work-life balance.

In the participating local and regional governments of this congress, except the Special Region of Yogyakarta with its slightly different situation, the declining birthrate is progressing and the population is declining in Asia. When the birthrate gets this low, local municipalities will have trouble sustaining demographically if it keeps going down. Therefore, the declining birthrate is a core issue for each municipality.

Furthermore, the declining birthrate issue is complexly intertwined with various factors, which means that clearing one factor will not be enough. It is a difficult issue to resolve. Hence, a definitive conclusion is that countermeasures against the decreasing population, including the declining birthrate, will depend on a comprehensive approach by the municipalities, and it will require a long-term effort. Through listening to opinions from the participating local governments during the discussion, I realized that this issue requires efforts both comprehensive and also unique.

A very active and long discussion was held. I hope that today's discussion gave you some pointers in the process to resolve the administrative issues that each is facing.

