



Women
Role
Models



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Into an Age of
Women Spreading their Wings

Women
Role
Models



Nagasaki University
Women Researchers
Role Models V

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Messages from women researchers playing active roles on the global stage

It gives me great pleasure to present “Nagasaki University Women Researchers: Role Models V” to you all. The Nagasaki University Center for Diversity and Inclusion has already presented several anthologies of role models introducing women researchers who are affiliated with or graduates of Nagasaki University. The theme of this volume is the overseas research activities of Nagasaki University’s women researchers.

In 2019 Nagasaki University was selected to participate in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) “The Initiative for the Implementation of the Diverse Research Environment (Advanced Type)”, under which it established the “Women Researchers Support Office” with the role of promoting activities providing comprehensive support to women researchers. The Support Office provides various support programs for woman researchers, including the subsidies for women researchers on studying/doing research overseas and the subsidies for women researchers on copy editing theses in English. This anthology of role models presents profiles of Nagasaki



Director,
Nagasaki University
Center for Diversity and Inclusion
Prof. Yuri YOSHIDA

University’s women researchers as they make connections in various forms with overseas institutions and researchers as part of their research activities, deepening and broadening their research while polishing themselves, as well as messages to readers. Some contributors have undertaken

long-term study abroad and short-term/long-term joint research projects, and the countries and regions they have collectively visited are many and varied.

This volume illustrates that there are many, many outstanding women researchers playing active roles on the global stage, each realizing their own personal ambitions and professions of choice. It is my hope that you will all accept this message and take the activities of these remarkable women as a role model in developing your own careers. The Nagasaki University Center for

Diversity and Inclusion supports not only women researchers, but also the female junior high school students, high school students, undergraduate students, and graduate students who are following in their footsteps, in their endeavors to become whoever and whatever they wish to be.

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Women Role Models



Experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic while studying abroad: What is “lockdown”?



No.

Prof. Hiromi KURODA

Institute of Biomedical Sciences (Health Sciences)

Prof. Hiromi KURODA received her doctorate in nursing from the Department of Health Sciences, Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Kyushu University. In 2019–2020 she studied abroad at the Rutgers University School of Nursing in Newark, New Jersey, in the U.S. She first joined Nagasaki University in 2009 returning in 2018 after working as an assistant professor at the Japanese Red Cross Kyushu International College of Nursing from 2016 to 2018. She took up her present position in 2020.

A planned year of studying abroad hurriedly cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic

Prof. Hiromi KURODA teaches mainly Basic Nursing Science in the School of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Nagasaki University. In September 2019 she went to study at the Rutgers University School of Nursing in Newark, New Jersey, U.S., for what she had intended to be a year-long stay; however, she was forced to return to Japan three months earlier than planned. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was forced to make this agonizing decision.

Newark is in the State of New Jersey, but is virtually next door to New York, with Manhattan only 20 kilometers away. The reasons that I chose to study in Newark are because Rutgers University is carrying out advanced research regarding sleep apnea in people with Down syndrome and nursing education, which are my research themes; and also because Newark has a well-developed public transportation system, enabling me to live there easily without a car. However, because Newark is so close to New York, the city also went into lockdown after March 20 and the university was also closed. All students living in dormitories had to either go home (to other states or countries) or move to non-dormitory accommodation. Fortunately for me I was living in a family-type maisonette apartment, and I was able to continue my studies. Initially I encountered one surprise after another. I wondered, “Huh? What’s a ‘lockdown’?”

Looking back now, in a sense it was a precious experience.

Since my daily life while studying abroad was taken up with constantly gathering information and making decisions for myself, I also gathered information about the COVID-19 situation from internet news as well as nurse friends working at hospitals in New York. And so I realized that this was a serious issue and thankfully was able to make preparations in advance, which was tremendously helpful. I was unsure whether to stay or go since there was a possibility that I might be able to recommence my research activities if I stayed until August, but the timing for returning to Japan was important. I made my decision to return to Japan after hearing on the news that flights to Narita Airport would recommence in June.

“It’s up to you”

Until the turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, was your study abroad experience fulfilling and enjoyable?

Yes, it was. Something that particularly impressed me was how people were always saying to me, “It’s up to you.” At first I tended to be a bit hesitant and asked questions like, “It is possible to do this?” As a visitor, I did not want to cause inconvenience or bother to anyone. But every time I asked this question, the reply was always, “It’s up to you.” That is to say, what was important was not whether or not it was possible for me to do something, but rather clearly conveying, “This is what I want to do.” I want to see nursing practice sites in the U.S.; I want to meet researchers who are studying support for children with disabilities; I want to acquire English conversation skills of a level that enables me to carry out everyday activities without difficulty. When I clearly stated what I wanted, people would introduce me to people who could help me or gave me information, enabling me to take the next step. I learned that, since I only had limited time, I needed to clarify my objectives and goals and act rationally.

Prof. KURODA also said that, although undertaking all the paperwork and negotiations necessary for studying abroad, from obtaining a travel visa to taking out travel insurance, was time-consuming and difficult, the experience actively changed her awareness, enabling her to grow as a person, and she claims that this has been the greatest benefit of her study abroad experience.

If I am able to travel abroad again, next time I want there to be no slip-ups (laughs). If I have the chance, I would very much like to try study abroad again.



Prof. KURODA says, “Having a doctorate, the university faculty and researchers took really good care of me. One of the benefits of this experience was creating a network with Rutgers University faculty members.” Photograph shows a scene from simulation training.



Experiences where you see a place with your own eyes and feel the atmosphere are possible even in a short stay abroad



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Assoc. Prof. Kahori GENJO

Institute of Integrated Science and Technology (Engineering)

Assoc. Prof. Kahori GENJO received her doctorate in engineering from the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, School of Engineering, Tohoku University. In 2009 she studied abroad for one month at the Technical University of Denmark's International Centre for Indoor Environment Energy (ICIEE) in Kongens Lyngby, Denmark. She joined Nagasaki University in 2015 and took up her current position in the same year.

Experiencing the slow life of Northern Europe and the degree of freedom in the EU

People often believe that in order to study abroad, one must be prepared to stay overseas for a long period of time. However, another way of approaching study abroad is to begin with just one month of studying abroad. This is the story of Assoc. Prof. Kahori GENJO.

When I was working in my job before last, I was able to participate in an overseas training program from instructors, studying in Denmark in a short-term program for one month. I chose to study at the Technical University of Denmark, which has an advanced educational program related to the comfort of living environments, which is my specialist research field. Actually, the main component of the program wasn't research; rather, I mostly observed lectures and interviewed instructors and students, but the research activities were high level and I was also able to attend workshops and seminars. There were always mini-international-conference-like events being held, and there were also unexpected opportunities to talk with renowned researchers.

It sounds very fulfilling. Were the days hectic?

Yes they were, but the research is being carried out in a relaxed atmosphere and big research results are being achieved despite the slow living. Within the EU, it is easy to study in different countries as tuition fees are free if the two universities are affiliated and there are credit exchange systems in place, so half the students are international students. The students also regard this as the "best mix". When I showed people data on room temperatures in wooden housing in Japan's Tohoku region during a presentation I made as part of my research there, I was asked, "How can Japanese people sleep in such low temperatures?" In Northern Europe, room temperatures are high all day as buildings are heated 24-hours-a-day, so the people inside sleep in lightweight sleepwear. In Japan, people tend to turn off the heater and snuggle up under a futon when they sleep. Studying in Denmark enabled me to realize cultural differences and verify my own research from a different perspective.

Unlike when traveling for sightseeing, footwork is light if you have a base

Assoc. Prof. GENJO already enjoyed traveling overseas, but her study abroad experience made her realize there is a big difference between visiting a place for sightseeing and living there.

Prices are extremely high in Northern Europe and I exceeded my budget for living expenses. For this reason, part way through my stay I rented an inexpensive room for myself in the suburbs, but it was discovered that I was commuting from outside the travel zone my rail pass was originally purchased for and I ended up paying a fine. Although my misuse of the rail pass had been unintentional, the rail officers did not go easy on me as a foreigner: "If you don't know something, you have to ask. It is your fault for not asking."

During her stay in Denmark, Assoc. Prof. GENJO apparently also visited Norway and Sweden.

I was able to see how people ordinarily lived in normal residential areas that are not sightseeing zones, and this was a huge benefit for my research. Right now my children are in elementary school, and so I think it would be difficult for me to be away from Japan for an extended period of time in the near future. When my children were younger, I may have had more freedom to travel around. I want to say to the young generation of instructors, experience abroad provides a good opportunity to examine your own research objectively, even if the experience is short-term. I recommend getting away from Japan at least once and seeing if your own research is also valid from a global perspective.



In front of a statue of Hans Christian Andersen, the person everyone thinks of when "Denmark" is mentioned. Says Assoc. Prof. GENJO, "If you only have a week to move around, you tend to be packed as much as possible into your schedule, but if you have a month, you have a little more leeway. Having said that, I still ended up packing quite a lot in."

Kahori GENJO



In life, you need to go with the flow:
do your very best in every situation



Prof. Seiko GOTO

Institute of Integrated Science and Technology (Environmental Science)

Prof. Seiko GOTO graduated from the M.L.A. Landscape Architecture course in the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, in the U.S. in 1993 and received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Graduate School of Natural Sciences, Chiba University, in 1997. After working in the architectural design division of TODA CORPORATION from 1993 to 1997, she went to North America where she worked as an instructor at the University of Toronto in Canada. After working as an Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba and Rutgers University in the U.S., Prof. GOTO joined to Nagasaki University in 2014 and was appointed to her current position in the same year.

Live in the U.S. or go home to Japan?

It may be rare to find someone who has led a life as eventful as that of Prof. Seiko GOTO. Born into a family of artists, she initially aspired to become a pianist, but this ambition was frustrated and she instead studied art at the Tokyo University of the Arts. Here her heart was stolen by the beauty of gardens, and she decided on Japanese gardens and landscape gardens as her theme. She travelled to Canada with the objective of searching for points in common between the concept of Koishikawa Korakuen and that of Germany's natural gardens. While a visiting researcher at the University of Toronto, she met and married a Chinese-Canadian man and gave birth to her son. She was employed as an assistant professor by the University of Manitoba, but her husband died suddenly soon afterwards, when her son was two years old.

And so I thought, should I return to Japan and find employment with a company, raising my son alone? Or should I continue to live and work in the U.S. as a teacher? A child with Chinese blood and only one parent could become the target of bullying at a Japanese school. Whatever the case, I would have no choice but to work from morning till night. In this respect, at an American university there would be no restriction on time as long as I produced results, and it was even possible to take my child to the university with me. And so I decided to live in the U.S. and balance child-raising and work.

Her son's after-school lessons were so far away that Prof. GOTO needed to take him by car. Every day she would apparently take her laptop computer and prepare lessons or work on academic papers while she waited for his lesson to finish.

Specialization is the axis for researchers. Human relationships expand from here.

When women researchers are considering studying abroad, one cause for concern is child-raising. However, Prof. GOTO proclaims that this may be a needless worry.

The elementary school that my son attended had a mix of races, with around one-quarter white, one-quarter black, one-quarter brown, and one-quarter yellow. The students separated naturally into groups.

One time, my son said something interesting. He said, "The yellow kids are focused on tests; the white kids are prideful and lie; the brown kids are physically strong; and the black kids are kind and considerate. When I fall over, it's always the black kids who wait for me to stand up." In an environment where it was natural for the person next to you to be different but where there was mutual respect, it was possible for children to grow as people rather than as a [race]."

Did your long time conducting research overseas provide sustenance for Prof. GOTO as well?

For us, research was like the axis of our lifestyle. For example, I have been friends for 20 years with a neurology expert who is Jewish. Our common theme is Japanese gardens. From a medical perspective, when you look at something beautiful, your brain releases dopamine, which soothes the spirit. I want to pursue Japanese gardens as a form of design, while my friend wants to analyze them from a medical perspective, and so our senses match each other perfectly. From here, a relationship of trust is developed over time.

Prof. GOTO also says that there is tremendous happiness in being able to make a friend who understands your feelings by overcoming linguistic barriers after digging as deeply into your field of specialization as you have pride. For this reason, she believes that the younger you are when you experience living overseas, the better.

In life, you need to go with the flow: all you can do is do your very best in every situation. Planning is important, but things not going to plan are a just life."



"Landscape specialists in the U.S. all gain modernist inspiration from Japanese gardens and Japanese architecture. However, previously there had never been anyone who could properly explain the history and background of Japanese gardens/architecture to them, and so I studied intensely so that I could fulfill this role!"—comment by Prof. GOTO when showing a large group of visitors around Kyoto.

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Seiko GOTO



When living communally while at sea,
discover “points in common”
through conversation



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Assoc. Prof. **Yoshiko KONDO**
Institute of Integrated Science and Technology (Fishery Science)

Assoc. Prof. Yoshiko KONDO received her doctorate in agriculture from the Department of Aquatic Bioscience, Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo. From 2008 to 2011 she studied abroad for three years at the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Southern California, in the U.S. She joined Nagasaki University in 2015 and was appointed to her current position in 2018.

Mutual complementation of parameters among various ocean specialists

Assoc. Prof. Yoshiko KONDO has experienced research life not only overseas—“over the sea”—but also “on the sea”. At the Faculty of Fisheries, she is conducting research on the relationship between chemicals is the ocean and plankton.

Metallic elements such as iron—of which very little is found in the ocean—are key players in the growth of phytoplankton, which are primary producers of fisheries resources. However, there is still much that is unknown about how these metallic elements move in the ocean and what kinds of changes they effect on the species composition and proliferation rates of primary producers such as red tide phytoplankton, and so I am studying these dynamics. For international joint research surveys, the research vessels carry researchers from all around the world.

Communal living at sea must be difficult with nowhere you can escape to.

Actually, it's easier than living on land. It takes less than a minute to get to work. I wash my face, and you needn't worry about fixing your hair because you'll be wearing a helmet anyway (laughs.) My field of specialization is trace metallic elements such as iron, but even if I know the distribution of these elements, it is impossible for me to explain how this distribution is determined. Accordingly, I often work in cooperation with various ocean specialists who are experts in biology, chemistry, and physics, etc., to measure various parameters, mutually complementing each other's work. This may also lead to some kind of joint research in the future. For this reason, whenever we have some spare time I try to talk to other people, even those I am meeting for the first time. Ship and ocean related research terminology is often common across research fields, and the other researchers will understand what I am trying to say. This also leads to everyday conversations.

With constant contact with different cultures,
there's no time for getting discouraged

You also studied abroad for three years at the University of Southern California.

Yes, the decision for me to go to the U.S. was made

very suddenly and so I had absolutely no time to prepare; I experienced a lot of difficulty with the language. The accommodation my boss arranged for me was a share house with two male housemates (who I had never met before), so initially I was surprised! But these people were really kind and taught me anything I asked them about. Even when I got home at night and flopped exhausted on my bed, they would quickly come in and invite me to play tennis or have a drink with them, and so I hardly spent any time alone. Immediately after I arrived in the U.S., I had no time to get mentally down and discouraged. Japanese manga also helped me through. Many people overseas are fans of Japanese manga and anime. Of course, I carried out my work meticulously. I conducted experiments very carefully. Although there was the danger of not being able to convey what I wanted to say in presentations, I also included slides listing the important points to ensure there was no misunderstanding. When I was unsure, I followed-up using written text, such as in e-mails, so that people could read what I wanted to say. Although my English language skills are poor, I think I am able to convey my determination.

What future developments do you have planned?

I want to research the ocean around Nagasaki as well as other oceans. Changes in the marine environment have come to be viewed as issues in recent years, and I want to steadily carry out measurements and research that will lead to solutions in various ocean areas.



Whenever Assoc. Prof. KONDO is on a research vessel, the first activity that takes place every time is disaster-prevention drills. In drills in Japan, rescue suits are often put on by one person while everyone else watches the demonstration, but on American research vessels and certain other ships, everyone puts on a rescue suit. Here Assoc. Prof. KONDO (left) is clowning it up for the camera together with a graduate student (center) and another research technician (right).



The next research stage become visible through new encounters



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Assoc. Prof. Naomi HOSODA

Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (Global Humanities and Social Sciences)

Assoc. Prof. Naomi HOSODA received her doctorate in Area studies from the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University. She has studied abroad numerous times: From 1984 to 1986 at the United World College in New Mexico, U.S.; from 1991 to 1994 at the School of Graduate Studies, Queen's University, in Canada; and from 2001 to 2003 at the Third World Studies Center, University of the Philippines. She joined Nagasaki University in 2019 and was appointed to her current position in the same year.

The meaning of being together with people from a diversity of backgrounds

Assoc. Prof. Naomi HOSODA received the 36th Masayoshi Ohira Memorial Prize (Masayoshi Ohira Memorial Foundation) and the 41st Award for the Promotion of Studies on Developing Countries (Institute of Developing Economies / Japan External Trade Organization) for "Searching for 'Luck': An Ethnography of Filipino Migrants and their Affective Ties," a compilation of works she researched in the Philippines over a 17 year period.

I chose Filipino migration as my research theme after my graduate school supervisor in Canada asked, "Why are there so many Filipino women working in the entertainment industry in Japan?" At that time, my image of Filipino migrants was that of people coming to Japan because they are poor and working in the industry reluctantly. I felt sorry for them. In reality, however, when I interviewed women from the Philippines, they would say to me, "So, what is it that you want to hear? OK, then, I'll tell you that version." They were leading me around by the nose! (laughs) They were powerful. I was ashamed to realize that I had simply been projecting my theories onto Filipino people without knowing them at all and having had no experience working overseas myself. Around that time, a Japanese person launched a daily newspaper for Japanese people in the Philippines, and I was hired as a reporter for this newspaper. This was really lucky for me. After I resigned from the newspaper, I enrolled in a graduate school in Japan while also being a visiting researcher at the University of the Philippines, which enabled me to carry out my fieldwork over a long period of time.

You're the type of person who does not miss the chance that might lead to an encounter with the next action, aren't you?

You may be right about that (laughs).

You have also an experience of studying abroad during high school and university, so I find it surprising that you didn't know English until you entered junior high school.

As a kid, I simply thought if I wrote Japanese sentences using alphabet characters, English speakers would understand me (laughs). Despite this, I was adventurous, and I loved studying geography, and so I

wanted to travel overseas. I decided to apply to an international school called United World College, and fortunately for me I was accepted. Of all the campuses around the world, I attended the UWC in New Mexico in the U.S. Students of the same age as me from 72 countries all came together at the school and lived in dormitories on campus. Here I learned the importance of adjusting yourself to an environment where you are surrounded by people from diverse backgrounds, and this became the foundation of my life.

Being a minority attracts attention at global-scale conferences

Assoc. Prof. HOSODA has also made research presentations at numerous international conferences.

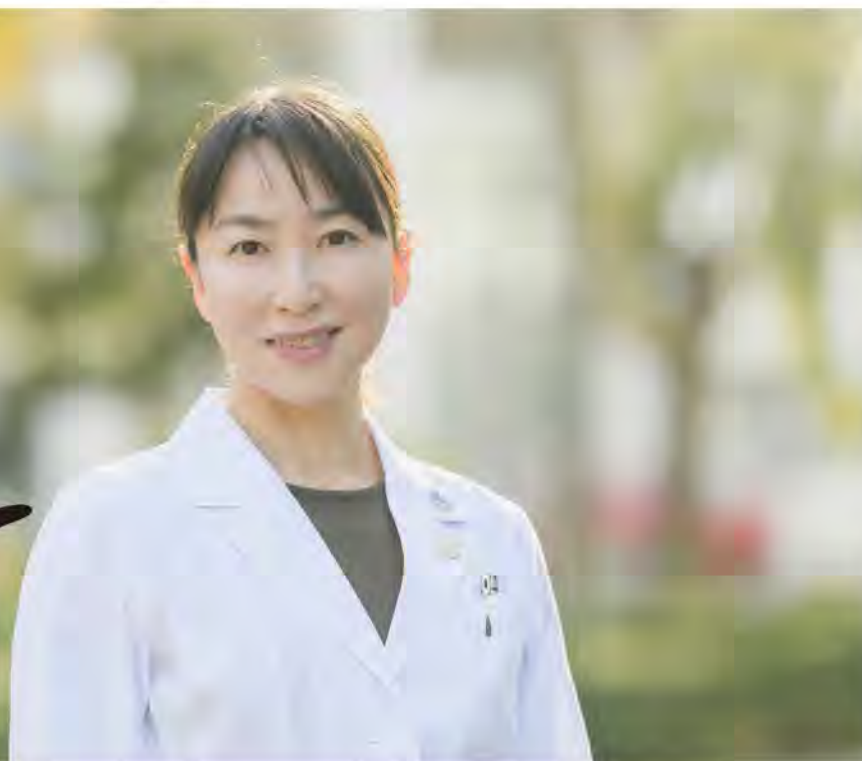
Even when Japanese researchers go overseas, many tend to focus their attention on preparing their presentation and collecting research materials by themselves. In contrast, quite a lot of researchers from other countries pour effort into building new networks and searching for the next step to take. In my field of cultural anthropology, there are few Japanese researchers who make presentations overseas, and so when they do, they draw attention and researchers from other countries approach them: "You should give talks at other conferences as well!" "Let's collaborate!" Research develops along perspectives and themes that you could not have imagined in Japan so your own research scope expands. I believe that more researchers should actively take on such challenges.



Field work in the Philippines focused on two locations: villages on the outskirts of cities and slums in Manila housing people who had left their villages to seek their fortune in the capital. The photograph shows Assoc. Prof. HOSODA interviewing the residents of an outer-lying island.

Naomi HOSODA

Instead of thinking up reasons
not to study abroad,
be brave and just jump in!



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Asst. Prof. Kazuko YAMAMOTO

Nagasaki University Hospital (Infection Control and Education Center)

Asst. Prof. Kazuko YAMAMOTO received her Doctor of Medicine degree from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Nagasaki University. She studied abroad from 2009 to 2013 at the Boston University Pulmonary Center, Massachusetts, in the U.S. She joined Nagasaki University in 2015 and was appointed to her current position in the same year.

Inspired by one word from Prof. Kohno:
“Search for yourself!”

Asst. Prof. Kazuko YAMAMOTO currently teaches lectures on the theme of “Know-how for studying abroad,” which is aimed at young researchers, but she herself has had the experience of studying abroad for four years at Boston University in the U.S.

My goal was to work overseas at some point in the future. My field of specialization is respiratory infection and I carry out research on diseases such as bacterial pneumonia. I had wanted to study abroad ever since I joined Nagasaki University Hospital's Second Department of Internal Medicine. At that time, Prof. Shigeru KOHNO (currently the President of Nagasaki University), was my supervisor, and I was certain that he would act as an intermediary between me and my study abroad destination institution. However, all he said to me was “Search for yourself!” (laughs.) So I rushed to gather information from my seniors who had studied abroad.

Searching for a study abroad destination institution by yourself must have been a high hurdle.

I wanted to study microbiology and immunology, and so I searched for laboratories that were world leaders in these fields. Also, rent and living costs in an urban area are expensive, so I underwent interviews with the candidate institutions to see if it would be possible for them to pay me a salary. Despite my lowly status I prepared my resume and application form so as to enhance my image as much as possible and then set out on a cross-country “interview” trip to three locations across the U.S. I also negotiated about salary. Culturally speaking, Japanese people regard not bringing up the subject of money as being a virtue, but I think that people should request payment that is of equivalent value to the work being performed.

What was it like when you finally got to the U.S.?

The first three months were tough. I was the only Japanese person at the center, and the projects also required great care as well as lots and lots of practice. Even if I made a presentation, the lively discussion afterwards went over my head and I felt left behind. I became a bit despondent. Eventually, after nine months I was able to obtain positive data that could be used as the basis for a research paper, and the following year I was able to obtain research funding in the U.S. From the third year onwards, researchers began coming from around the country and the world to learn my

techniques, and I think we were able to contribute to the laboratory receiving a large grant.

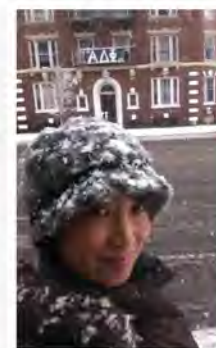
There are countless reasons not to go....
be brave and just jump in!

You said that you were in Boston from 2009 until 2013....

The Boston Marathon Bombing and the Great East Japan Earthquake happened during this time period. At the time of the terrorist bombing, I remember being scared because the perpetrator's hideout was in the district where I was living. In addition, when the Great East Japan Earthquake struck, American news media showed shocking images and news, and I and many of the Japanese people I knew in the U.S. became depressed for around two weeks. Over my four years of studying abroad, what sustained me mentally was the support of my tennis team friends. I had actually been an enthusiastic tennis player during my university student days. While work and research completely filled my days, I also knew it was important to have a world of my own outside these as well. I truly felt the accuracy of the expression “Art helps the body”.

What is your message to young researchers following in your footsteps?

If you start thinking up reasons why you shouldn't study abroad, you'll become paralyzed. In fact, despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, two young researchers from the Medical Department have travelled overseas for study and I was also able to assist them. If you have an opportunity, I think that you need to be brave and leap in immediately.



I've heard that Boston winters are severe, with temperatures sometimes sinking as low as

20°C on some days...Says Asst. Prof. YAMAMOTO. “I don't like the cold, so my biggest concern was whether I would be able to survive Boston winters. I thought I would freeze to death as I was standing at the bus stop waiting for a bus! (laughs) But humans can do anything if they try! I was also sustained by the knowledge that my fellow Medical Department physicians hadn't forgotten me. It is truly gratifying to know that you have a place to go back to.

Kazuko YAMAMOTO

From a relationship of international student-boss during study abroad to one of joint research partners



Prof. Asuka NANBO

National Research Center for the Control and Prevention of Infectious Diseases, Nagasaki University

Prof. Asuka NANBO received her doctorate in pharmaceutical sciences from the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Hokkaido University. She studied abroad from 2003 to 2008 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the U.S. (at the McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research from 2003 to 2006 and at the School of Veterinary Medicine from 2006 to 2008). She joined Nagasaki University in 2019 and was appointed to her current position in the same year.

Frustration of being unable to express myself — it was like being a baby!

Prof. Asuka NANBO is in charge of education and training for staff using the soon-to-be-completed BSL-4 (biosafety level 4) laboratory.

My field of specialization is basic virology, and the viruses that I am studying are the Ebola virus and the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). These viruses each cause hemorrhagic fever and cancer in humans, but there are many aspects of their mechanisms that are still not understood, and so the aim of my research is to clarify these mechanisms. To ensure that the BSL-4 laboratory is operated safely, the most important thing is for the researchers using the facilities to operate the equipment correctly. I also work for the human resources training division, and it is my mission to nurture next-generation researchers who are capable of playing an active role in research on infectious diseases in the future through education and training.

You say you studied abroad for “5 years + 1 year” at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. What do you mean by “5 years + 1 year”?

For five years, from 2003 to 2008, I carried out research on BBV and the Ebola virus at two laboratories, and then after I returned to Japan I went back to the same university to conduct further research during my sabbatical year.

Did you have any difficulties with language?

During high school I liked English and kept up my English conversation studies, but when I was in an actual English-speaking country I was shocked at how little my English was understood by native speakers. The frustration of being unable to say what I wanted to say freely—it was as if I had turned into a baby! (laughs) After I had been living in the U.S. for around three months, my ears began growing accustomed to the English I was hearing. What helped me to gain confidence was a project aimed at establishing an imaging system using a microscope. Through numerous discussions with the microscope company staff I was able to resolve problems one-by-one, leading to the project’s success, and through this process I was able to build a relationship of trust with my boss. Thanks to the success of the project, I also gained recognition from people in other laboratories, who would say, “Oh, you’re the person who did that job!”

Sharing common research goals, my boss and I became like family

I have known Bill—my boss during the time I was studying abroad—for 17 years now. We continue to conduct joint research together, and we are both currently acting as guest editors for a certain academic journal. We also have a close personal relationship, and Bill tells me that “You are one of the family.” My boss and I had common approaches to research as well as common scientific interests. His wife is also a researcher, a woman who served as the Dean of the Faculty of Neuroscience during an age when it was difficult for women to play an active role in the world of science. This background also contributed to my boss and his wife both providing me with support. On the topic of women entering the workforce, Bill said something that left a strong impression on me: “Women comprise 52% of humanity, but they have been unable to achieve a level of activity in society proportional to this percentage. Without the contribution of women, who have the same intellectual capabilities as the 48% of humanity comprising males, it is impossible for science and technology to advance.” For researchers, human networks are huge assets. In future, I believe that my role is to “pay it forward” in terms of building human networks by introducing young researchers to my own human networks.



Prof. NANBO is pictured in the back row on the far left. Next to her is Prof. Bill Sugden. She says, “In terms of laboratory facilities, there was not much of a difference from laboratories in Japan. Unlike in Japan, however, horizontal connections rather than vertical connections are close. If a problem occurred, my boss would say, “Prof. XX of the YY Department is very familiar with that—try asking him!” and this person would give me appropriate advice, enabling me to solve the problem smoothly. This happened on a number of occasions.”

No.

Women
Role
Models

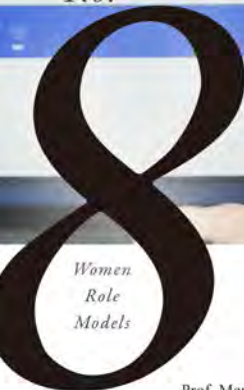
Asuka NANBO



Conducting joint research with researchers
from different cultures
and backgrounds is the global standard



No.



Women
Role
Models

Prof. Meng Ling (Sherry) MOI

Institute of Tropical Medicine, Nagasaki University

Prof. Meng Ling (Sherry) MOI received her Doctor of Medicine degree from the Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba. From 2010 to 2014, she worked at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, Japan, as a technical official for the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. She joined Nagasaki University in 2015 and was appointed to her current position in 2020. From 2016 to 2018, she provided technical guidance at the Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and other institutions. In 2020, she was the first foreign national to be awarded the 4th Japan Medical Research and Development Grand Prize, Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) President Prize.

Currently developing a COVID-19 vaccine—
currently the world's most-needed vaccine

Hailing from Malaysia, Prof. Meng Ling (Sherry) MOI spent one-third of the year conducting research overseas while based at the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Nagasaki University.

Right now I am unable to travel overseas for research because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but basically I go anywhere. In the case of Vietnam in particular, I spent a year visiting research institutions around the country teaching researchers techniques for diagnosing Zika fever. I was really happy when we found that these techniques can also be used to diagnose the COVID-19 virus. Because we have built relationships of trust, it was also possible to obtain COVID-19 virus specimens, which have been very useful in the research we are currently conducting to develop a COVID-19 vaccine.

So Nagasaki University is also conducting research to develop a COVID-19 vaccine?

That's right. Globally, first-generation vaccines have been fully developed and basic data regarding people vaccine with them is being gathered. We can utilize this information in our research on second- and third-generation vaccines. These days, university research laboratories research seeds, which are then developed by pharmaceutical companies, which do not have the facilities for conducting basic research. In developing vaccines, BSL laboratories where basic research can be carried out are essential for any progress to be made. The BSL-4 laboratory that Nagasaki University is currently building is an extremely important facility for the development of vaccines in Japan.

From your perspective having come to Japan from Malaysia 17 years ago, Prof. MOI, what are the differences between the research system in Japan and those in other countries?

In the case of Japan, there is a strong focus on creating products that are high-quality. If something is to be sent out into the world, it needs to be as close as possible to 100% perfect. For this reason, trust and reliability are high, and I myself have found many aspects from which I should learn. In other countries, the emphasis is on first of all producing results, and then disseminating those results, whatever their content may be. I think a strength of research overseas is horizontal collaboration. For example, American pharmaceutical company Pfizer is collaborating with a German venture company, and British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca has teamed

up with the University of Oxford. Collaborations are formed for the purpose of combining various institutions strengths on a global scale. Japan also needs to strengthen its foundation for developing products while sharing information. If Japan does this, there is the possibility that 1 + 1 will add up to 3, 4, or even 5.

A global form seen in Malaysian families

In addition to your native language of Malay, Prof. MOI, you also speak English, Japanese, Indonesian, Mandarin, and Cantonese—six languages altogether!

Malaysia is a multiethnic country with citizens from various ethnic groups—Malay, Chinese, Indian, and so on. Since I was a child, various different languages would fly around the room on our household. Likewise, in the research world, it is only natural for researchers with different nationalities and cultures to conduct joint research together. In order to blend into such an environment, it is a good idea to travel and study overseas while you are young, if you have the chance. The key to carrying out joint research and development successfully is to understand the cultures and backgrounds of the people you are working with. When I visit the countries of researchers with whom I am conducting joint research, I sometimes visit local museums to learn about the country's history and culture.

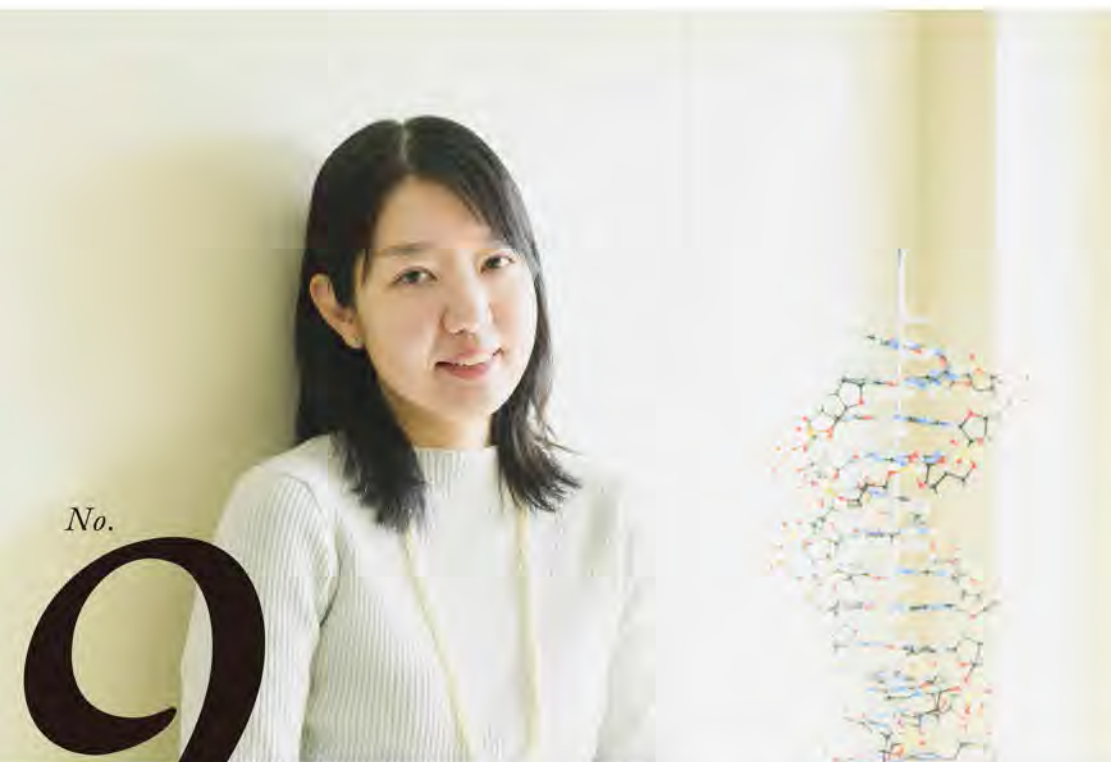
Prof. MOI's comment that the new standard for researchers is mutual respect while cooperating in their respective fields of specialization, and that experience overseas is the first step to achieving this, left a lasting impression.



Prof. MOI providing technical guidance on laboratory diagnosis of Zika fever in Hanoi City, Vietnam, when she was working in cooperation with experts from the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific and Vietnam's National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in 2016. The following year, she continued to provide diagnostic technique support to Vietnam's major hygiene and epidemiology research institutions. Says Prof. MOI, "Through these activities, I was reminded that the first cases of Zika virus associated microcephaly were discovered in Asia, and that the developing countermeasures against Zika fever is extremely important."

Meng Ling MOI

New York is energizing,
but also requires energy



No.

Prof. Asako YAMAYOSHI

Institute of Biomedical Sciences (Pharmaceutical Sciences)

Prof. Asako YAMAYOSHI received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Graduate School of Science and Engineering Department of Biomaterial Science, Kyoto Institute of Technology. She studied abroad at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the U.S. from 2012 to 2013. She joined Nagasaki University in 2018 and was appointed to her current position in the same year.

Studying structural analysis at the world's
oldest cancer research center

Says Prof. Asako YAMAYOSHI, "I think that DNA is the most beautiful molecule in the world. If you want to take my photograph, please let it be with my beloved DNA model." Naturally, her field of specialization is drug discovery.

Creating drugs that don't have any side-effects is my life's work. This is the world of nucleic acid medicine, where genes are used to cure genetic diseases. It is impossible to design a drug with no side-effects unless you know the target structure, and so that's why I decided to study structural analysis for 11 months at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the U.S.

The Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center is in the center of New York, so where did you live?

There's an apartment on Roosevelt Island, near Manhattan, that the Center rents, and I was able to live there. I enjoyed aerial walks across the ropeway on my commutes to and from work. Rockefeller University and Cornell University are located nearby, and I was able to obtain a common ID for the two universities, which enabled me to attend various seminars as well. With New York, at first glance the city itself appears quite dirty (laughs), but it's a place where people with ambitions to "do something" come together from throughout the world, for concerts, lectures, and shops. Although you receive a lot of energy from New York, you also need a lot of energy to live there.

Through fun and lonely days,
I learned the importance of family

What were your days like at the Center?

The structural analysis laboratory team was multicultural, and we did lots of testing every day, but on Fridays there was a Happy Hour when we drank free wine and beer. There was a clear distinction between ON and OFF time. At Halloween, everyone dressed up in costumes, and when I didn't dress up, someone said, "At least put on some ears!" and lent me some cat's ears. There was an Italian postdoctoral student called Giuseppe who arrived at the same time I did. We arrived at the same airport—both losing baggage—and even lived in the same apartment building, so we became good friends.

Wow, that sounds like a lot of fun, like the world of girl's comics!

Well, yes, but I also encountered some discrimination and unkindness. In our laboratory there were specialized staff whose job it was to wash and sterilize equipment, but they would ignore any equipment that we yellow people had used and just go home. There wasn't anything we could do about it so I asked someone who looked like they would know how to do it and I washed and sterilized the equipment myself. Ultimately, New York is a fun place on the one hand, but on the other hand, it can be incredibly lonely. I really felt the happiness of growing up surrounded by people in Japan and the importance of family. That's probably why I decided to get married when I returned to Japan. Now I believe that having someone to walk beside you in life gives you strength.



Prof. YAMAYOSHI says that even now English is not her strong point. "At high school I felt like I was being forced to learn English for university entrance examinations, but after my experience living overseas, I think that talking to people from all over the world has boosted my motivation." Even now, she says that she listens to NHK's English conversation classes on a daily basis.

What can be gained by venturing overseas?

We asked five women researchers to talk frankly about being a university researcher and studying abroad.



Prof.
Tomoko KADOWAKI

Prof.
Misa SUMI

Assoc. Prof.
Yuri NAKAJIMA

Assoc. Prof.
Juna SAIHAN

Assoc. Prof.
Keiko ENOKI

Going abroad can take various forms

—First of all, please introduce yourself and tell us about your field of specialization.

KADOWAKI: I belong to the School of Dentistry, and I carry out basic research aimed at finding the causes of periodontal disease and allergies as well as methods for controlling these.

NAKAJIMA: My field of specialization is sociology of education, and I belong to the Center for Educational Innovation. I conduct research on the theme of the careers of young people in regional areas and regional migration.

ENOKI: I am with the School of Education. My fields of specialization are educational systems and educational administration, and I am researching case examples from the United States of movements to reform education and build communities.

SAIHAN: My fields of specialization are family

sociology and migrant studies. I belong to the School of Global Humanities and Social Sciences. I am conducting research on the family living and work of people who migrate across national borders.

SUMI: I belong to the School of Dentistry's clinical training course, and I am involved in research and education related to head and neck area imaging diagnosis. I also carry out CT, MRI, and ultrasound imaging tests and diagnoses for dentistry patients at the university hospital.

—So, everyone, do any of you have experience studying abroad?

SUMI: I have never had an opportunity to study abroad, so I'm really looking forward to hearing what everyone has to say today.

ENOKI: I don't think that you could call it "studying abroad", but once or twice each year I have been going overseas to conduct short surveys of around 10 days duration. I have been doing this for nearly

eight years now, since I was studying for my Master's degree. I go to cities where they are implementing reforms that grab my interest, talk to the people concerned, and walk around the area. For example, I have visited California four times and Chicago three times, and next I am planning to go to New York. One of the subjects of my research, school consolidation, is carried out in Japan because of the declining number of children, but in the U.S. it is carried out because of declining performance in tests of academic ability. That is to say, school consolidation is promoted as part of scholastic studying abroad, but when I talk to local residents and research the housing policies and economic policies of the areas where school consolidation is being carried out, a different picture emerges. In Chicago, school consolidation and urban redevelopment are secretly linked, causing a phenomenon known as "gentrification" whereby wealthy people from other cities are enticed to the redeveloped areas and

forcing out the current residents, who are poor. I carry out hearings with local residents, school teachers, and NPOs regarding these mechanisms and their impact on children.

KADOWAKI: Are there local people who help you conduct these surveys?

ENOKI: I search academic papers and the internet myself to find people who will assist me. I send lots and lots of e-mails! My strategy is to "throw enough mud at the wall and some of it will stick" (laughs). But Americans are interesting, they can become very friendly and kind even after just one encounter. I'm sure that Dr. Nakajima is more knowledgeable about that aspect. Once I met up with someone and was talking with them, and during our conversation I mentioned that there was actually another person I had wanted to meet but they hadn't replied to my e-mail, and the person I was talking to called the person and introduced us then and there. Since I only have limited time to conduct surveys locally, I

can also be a bit tenaciously aggressive, taking the attitude, "If I'm going, I'd better get results!"

—Dr. Nakajima, you also went to the U.S., didn't you?

NAKAJIMA: That's right. After studying for my doctorate in Japan for five years, I enrolled at a graduate school in the United States. When my coursework was finished after around two years I returned to Japan, where I worked at a university, and travelled backed and forth between the U.S. and Japan. Ultimately I studied at the graduate school for around seven years. Finally I received my Ph.D. in sociology of education from the American graduate school.

Everyone: Wow! That's wonderful!

NAKAJIMA: The graduate school was in Buffalo, where Niagara Falls is located. The reason I decided to go there was that a professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo, told me via an acquaintance that "If somebody would like to study at our university, we would be happy to accept them." I wanted to study abroad myself at least once in my lifetime. I felt quite casual about it (laughs). But I was able to obtain an assistantship with the university, all my tuition and insurance were paid, and I was to receive a salary sufficient to cover living expenses and rent, and so I made the decision to earn my doctorate in the U.S. Incidentally, I was

I gained a sense of the broadness of study from the immense number of specialist books lining the library shelves row after row.



Assoc. Prof.
Yuri NAKAJIMA

Nagasaki University Center for Educational Innovation
Born in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, Assoc. Prof. Yuri NAKAJIMA received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Graduate School of Education, the State University of New York at Buffalo in the U.S. She joined Nagasaki University in 2015 and was appointed to her current position in the same year. Her field of specialization is sociology of education; her research theme is the careers of young people in regional areas and regional migration.

30 years old when I went to the U.S. Although I wasn't very good at English to begin with, the environment was perfect for studying and I became proficient at reading and writing.

ENOKI: I'm not very good at English, either, and I never had the courage to study abroad because of this. I think it's a really hard hurdle to overcome.

NAKAJIMA: I graduated from a university with an image of its graduates being able to speak English. Precisely for this reason, everyone other than those who had lived overseas as children and spoke English fluently had a tremendous complex about speaking English. Before I studied abroad, I prepared papers to be presented at international conferences meticulously, and simply read them. No wonder, since I couldn't speak English! But studying abroad enabled me to hone my English language skills. After all, exactly as the rumors said, we were always being told, "Read this book by next week!" (laughs)

KADOWAKI: Such a lot of homework... That must have been really though!

JUNA: Harvard University's library is famous for its lights staying on until three or four in the morning while students are studying hard.

NAKAJIMA: In the U.S., that kind of environment is normal. However, when I'm in Japan I have fewer opportunities to speak English, and so nowadays I attend English conversation classes once a week.

KADOWAKI: I also studied abroad in the U.S., in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Hershey is of course famous for chocolate. Incorporated into Pennsylvania State University, the medical center was built with funds donated by the Hershey company's founder, Milton Hershey. For this reason, there is a road called "Cocoa Avenue" and the sweet aroma of chocolate wafts across the town from the factory, depending on the wind direction.

Everyone: How wonderful!

KADOWAKI: Actually, the reason I was able to study abroad is because I was a research fellow with the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Under the Society's program, it is possible to use up to half of research funding for a three year period on research conducted overseas. This happened just around the time that I got married, and it was also decided that my husband would study abroad, and so I decided to go along as well.

—That's an unusual case.

KADOWAKI: My boss in the U.S. was conducting research in the same genre as I was, and she was a woman who was full of vitality. She would carry out her work while holding a sick child in her arms, and she also served as Faculty Dean. Before studying abroad I took one-on-one English conversation classes and set off to the U.S. thinking that my English was quite passable, but I when I got there I could not keep up with conversations at all! The speaking speed was completely different, and I also had difficulty participating in discussions at the laboratory. Then my boss said to me, "If I were told to read and write and prepare a thesis in Japanese, it would be impossible for me to do. Not only can you use Japanese, but you are also doing your best to use English. You're amazing!" These encouraging words greatly reduced the stress that I had been feeling. According to my boss, even if they cannot speak English fluently, a person who is passionate is able to convey what they want to say effectively.

—Since you were studying abroad together with your husband, even though you had stress building up while you were over there, surely there was some psychological relief.

KADOWAKI: It was forbidden to speak Japanese in my laboratory, and so I did complain to my husband in a small voice about the "Old Lady" (my boss) scolding me (laughs). But certainly, there was a Japanese researcher there who was encountering mental difficulties. Within the Japanese community we would say, "I'm a bit worried about him, so let's all get together," and we would bring food and talk out our pent-up stress in Japanese, reviving our spirits. At first the researcher I mentioned could not cook at all, but by the end he was baking cakes and bringing them to our get-togethers (laughs).

Everyday conversation and specialized research— in which are you better able to communicate?

—Dr. Saihanjuna, you are from China, so you are actually "abroad" at this very moment. Have you

Bursting with vitality,
my boss (woman) is one of
my role models.

Prof.
Tomoko KADOWAKI

Institute of Biomedical Sciences (Dentistry)
Born in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, Prof. Tomoko KADOWAKI received her doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Dental Science, Kyushu University. She joined Nagasaki University in 2009 and was appointed to her current position in 2014. Under the theme of immune response, she conducts research on the effects that periodontal disease bacteria can have on the entire body.



been in Japan for a long time?

JUNA: On reflection, I've actually lived half of my life in Japan. In my early 20s I worked in Beijing as a government employee. I worked in a department that aimed to protect the rights of ethnic minority groups in China in accordance with the Beijing City Government's ethnic policies. I wanted to study more about anthropology and ethnology related to minority groups, and I also wanted to travel abroad at least once in my life, and so I came to Japan based on these feelings.

KADOWAKI: Why Japan?

JUNA: I had travelled to Japan in the past to visit my father, who was a visiting professor at a university in Japan. In fact, I plotted a study abroad plan for myself in secret, without my parents' knowledge, and once I arrived in Japan I tried to persuade my parents, who were adamantly opposed to my studying in Japan. At that time, it was necessary for me to have a guarantor to study in Japan, and my father's friend kindly agreed to be my guarantor, and through his connections I ended up going to Aichi Prefecture.

NAKAJIMA: Did you learn Japanese after you came to Japan?

JUNA: Yes. I truly had to learn from scratch, but learning Japanese was really fun. For example, I decided that "I will use the vocabulary I learned today three times today," and I would gram my university instructors or university staff or neighbors in my community and talk to them. I would judge

When conducting research surveys in Japan, I tried to be as reticent and deferential as possible.



Assoc. Prof.
Juna SAIHAN

Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (Global Humanities and Social Sciences)
Born and raised in Beijing City, China, Assoc. Prof. Juna SAIHAN is ethnic Mongolian. She received her doctorate in education from the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University. She joined Nagasaki University in 2014 and was appointed to her current position in the same year. Her fields of specialization are family sociology and migrant studies.

from the expressions on their faces as I spoke whether or not I had communicated successfully. "OK, that phrase worked!" (laughs). Or "Oh, I seem to have used that word incorrectly" (laughs). However, when it came to my field of specialization, Japanese became really difficult! I had terrible trouble following the "History of Sociology" lectures, and for one or two years I had to borrow friends' lecture notes each time, finally gaining some understanding as I copied the notes. I was finally able to acquire proficiency by reading tons of books and going over papers and thesis repeatedly.

NAKAJIMA: My experience was actually the opposite. It was easier for me to understand academic discussions, but when it came to TV or everyday conversations, I had no idea what people were saying. I couldn't laugh along with everyone else.

JUNA: Japanese people are famous for their ability to read and write English well. In my case, in order to conduct field work in Japan I needed to be able to talk with people in various age groups. Moreover, I first conducted field work in an area of Aichi Prefecture where the Higashi-Mikawa dialect is especially strong (laughs). Just before someone mentioned the importance of being passionate or aggressive, but conversely when I am carrying out my research surveys I try to be as reticent and deferential as possible. People in farming villages in particular tend to be very conservative and it is difficult to enter their communities. I conducted a

survey of brides who had come to Japan from China for international marriages and their families. Ever since then my research theme has been migrants and their families.

—Prof. Sumi, you said that you have had no experience studying abroad; are there fewer opportunities for studying abroad for researchers in medicine-related fields?

SUMI: In the School of Dentistry, you certainly don't often hear about someone studying abroad before they have completed their doctoral degree.

KADOWAKI: In medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy, people study abroad after completing their doctoral degrees in the majority of cases. Even if you can't speak the language, you can understand techniques at a glance....

SUMI: Listening to everyone's stories today, frankly I feel envious and I would love to go and study abroad right now if it were possible. However, in cases like mine, when you are involved in a clinical course you are also seeing and treating patients every day until evening on top of conducting research and teaching, and if someone from the medical department takes a leave of absence, other staff have to carry their workload while they are gone. When someone goes overseas for study, too, the study abroad is premised on increasing the workload of other department staff, and so the reality is that it is difficult to study abroad simply because that is what you personally want to do. Even

I want to say to young researchers,
"If it's possible for you to go study
abroad, then GO!"

Prof.
Misa SUMI

Institute of Biomedical Sciences (Dentistry)
Born in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, Prof. Misa SUMI received her doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Dental Science, Kyushu University. She joined Nagasaki University in 1996 and was appointed to her current position in 2020. Her field of specialization is head and neck area imaging diagnosis.



if that issue could be somehow overcome, at this point in time I would prefer that younger researchers took the opportunity to study abroad rather than me going myself.

—I heard that in recent years Nagasaki University has been placing importance on researchers gaining experience overseas.

KADOWAKI: Even the Center for Diversity and Inclusion is encouraging women researchers to go overseas in order to build experience.

NAKAJIMA: If economic support is available, I think it is quite easy to study abroad or conduct research surveys overseas. It seems that there is a range of support available—long-term, medium-term, and short-term.

SUMI: It's a wonderful opportunity, so I want to tell young researchers to "Just GO!" I sense that even when you experienced difficulties initially when you studied abroad, you were able to overcome these and grow, and the experience has nourished you.

KADOWAKI: I feel that regarding someone as "amazing because they're been overseas" is missing the mark. Having been overseas myself, I find that the world is surprisingly small, people are the same everywhere.

NAKAJIMA: I agree. Just going to a foreign country does not bestow prestige (laughs). There's nothing "amazing" about going overseas. Going outside of Japan made me realize conversely that it is possible to work even if the language is different and the country is different.

SUMI: I think that on the contrary, having experienced the smallness of that world is the strength of all of you who have studied abroad. I think that eliminating needless fears and overcoming various experiences has given you confidence and broadened your perspectives.

NAKAJIMA: Certainly I gained confidence. The library of the American university where I was studying, I saw rows of specialist books in a certain genre lining one whole wall, and I was struck by the

Local people who had only just met me were very kind, and their kindness touched my heart.

Assoc. Prof.
Keiko ENOKI

Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (Education)
Born in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, Assoc. Prof. Keiko ENOKI received her doctorate in education from the Graduate School of Human Development and Environment, Kobe University. She joined Nagasaki University in 2019 and was appointed to her current position in the same year. Her fields of specialization are educational systems and educational administration. Her research theme is educational reform and community building.



sheer breadth of scholarship. In addition, I was 30 years old when I studied abroad, but there were school principals, university administrative staff, and many other people of varying ages who were studying for their Ph.D. at the university. Your own age becomes irrelevant.

JUNA: In Japan, people often ask, "How old are you?" or be concerned if you have repeated a year or two. It is a world of uniformity where going off the rails is regarded as having dire consequences. However, if you venture out into the world even once, you can gain strength for living in society.

NAKAJIMA: It's never too late to start studying—you can start at any age.

JUNA: Such people provide a diverse perspective. If the classroom is full of people of the same age with the same life experiences, discussions cannot become lively. Being mixed together with a diversity of people provides positive stimulation. It makes you think, "Perhaps I could go off the rails even further."

NAKAJIMA: That's right. Life will become much easier to live if you take that attitude.

—That's just one benefit of study abroad, isn't it? Thank you, everyone, for your contribution today.

*When you are among a diversity of people,
you come to be able to see different worlds*