

The 2015 Symposium on “The Challenge of Preserving Identity and Community in Global Cities”

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An international symposium, “The Challenge of Preserving Identity and Community in Global Cities” was held on 1st and 2nd of March 2015 in the Robert Menzies Building, Monash University, Melbourne. This event arose from September 2014 when an official affiliation between the Rikkyo Institute for Global Urban Studies, Tokyo, and the Centre for Population and Urban Research, Melbourne, was established. The symposium was jointly organized by the two research institutions.

The affiliation is in accordance with the emphasis of Monash University’s International Plan 2011-2015 “Advanced research standing and impact through international connectedness”. The University’s International Plan 2011-2015 identifies its four strategies: (i) S10 It seeks to build international collaborations within the current Australian National Competitive Grants scheme and thereby enhance its capability to engage in such international schemes; (ii) S11 It aims to form strategic partnerships in order to develop mutual advantages from research; (iii) S12 It will support the projection of Monash’s research strengths internationally; and (iv) S13 Grow the number of higher degree research applicants from high quality international applicants.

From the side of Rikkyo University, it has special research interests in Asia, Latin and North America and other areas, with various research institutions such as The Institute for American Studies, Institute for Latin American Studies, Rikkyo University Centre for Asian Area Studies, Institute of Social Welfare, and several others. We deem that there is huge potential for mutual benefits from a “Memorandum of Understanding” on collaborative research and exchange between Rikkyo University’s Institute of Global Urban Studies and Monash’s Centre for Population and Urban Research (CPUR) and School of Social Sciences. In terms of previous affiliations with Australia, Rikkyo University conferred an honorary doctoral degree upon former Prime Minister of Australia Bob Hawke in acknowledgment of his contribution to the development of economic and cultural ties between the two countries. The main activities between the two institutes will be around collaborative research in migration, social cohesion/ inclusion/ exclusion and identity. Urban

research and social research are two major research themes at the Rikkyo Institute of Global Urban Studies and Graduate School of Sociology; these align with the research themes of the Centre for Population and Urban Research and the School of Social Sciences at Monash University. The collaborative activities will lead to joint publications as well joint research fund applications.

The Memorandum of Understanding will enable us to seek support from Japanese sources and other international agencies. The area of cooperation will include, subject to mutual consent, any program or activity desirable and feasible to further academic interaction between the two institutions. Such areas of interaction might include: exchange of faculty and research personnel; exchange of publications, materials, and information; and cooperation for academic networking and conferences.

The first joint symposium was organized over two days: On the 1st of March, the Japanese contingent engaged in sightseeing, visiting some places of interest that shows Melbourne's inner city diversity. On the 2nd of March, Professors Yoshiaki Edwin NORO and Tetsuo MIZUKAMI from the College of Sociology and Professor Ariyoshi OGAWA from College of Law, Rikkyo University were received by Associate Professor Jo LINDSAY at the Monash Faculty of Arts.

The conference venue, Monash University, was opened in 1958, as a second Victorian University, named after Sir John Monash. According to Serle (1982: 529), "... he was first choice as a great Victorian Australian, before Deakin, is some indication of his surviving reputation. He would have liked the University's motto: '*Ancora Imparo*' – 'I am still leaning'. As for the period of the emergence of the Robert Menzies Building, "rising abruptly from the sprawl of Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs", Davison and Dingle (1995: 2) described it as follows:

When the [Monash University's Menzies] building was begun in 1961 the University lay on the farthest frontier of the metropolis. The first factories, shops and houses had only just appeared among the nurseries, orchards and chicken farms of the rural-urban fringe. Monash Students looked out on the muddy paddocks and nicknamed the 'Ming Wing' in honour of Prime Minister Menzies, ('Ming the Merciless', as he was known to his foes).

Our conference commenced with Opening Address by Director, Centre for Population and Urban Research, Associate Professor Dharma ARUNACHALAM. The Opening Session was chaired by Dr. Ernest HEALY, Research Fellow of the Centre for Population and Urban



Robert Menzies Building, Monash University

Research and consisted of the following three paper presentations: “Contemporary Ethnic Communities in Japan: The Characteristics of Inner City Tokyo,” by Prof. Tetsuo MIZUKAMI; “Regional Revitalization or Disappearing Municipalities?” by Professor Ariyoshi OGAWA; and “Expectations of Social Welfare amongst Public-Housing Residents: Outcome of Questionnaire Survey in the Shibuya District” by Professor Yoshiaki Edwin NORO. The Closing Session, with Chairperson of Prof. Tetsuo MIZUKAMI, Director of Rikkyo Institute for Global Urban Studies, included two paper presentations: “The Challenge of Social Cohesion in Major Australian Urban Centers,” by Dr. Ernest HEALY and

“Demographic Change and Australian Urban Life” by Associate Professor Dharma ARUNACHALAM. The conference was concluded with closing address by Professor Ariyoshi OGAWA, Vice-Director, Rikkyo Institute for Global Urban Studies.

After the conference, all the paper presenters had tea together with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Rae FRANCES at her office on the Caulfield Campus. We talked about prospective development of our academic ties, and the student exchange programs between Monash’s Faculty of Arts, and the Rikkyo College of Sociology. The exchange program is to commence in 2017. All the participants and some other guests had a farewell dinner at an Italian restaurant on Lygon Street, Carlton. We have promised to organize again next year and the second joint symposium will be held on February 28th and 29th 2016 in Melbourne.

References

- Davison, Graeme and Tony Dingle. 1995. “Introduction: The View from the Ming Wing.” In G. Davison, T. Dingle, and S. O’Hanlon (eds.) *The Cream Brick Frontier: Histories of Australian Suburbia*, Monash Publications in History No. 19, pp.2-17. Clayton: Monash University.
- Serle, Geoffrey. 1982. *John Monash: A Biography*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

