

Interview with Takashi Inoguchi, President of the University of Niigata Prefecture

Nourishing Leadership for Global Governance

By Japan SPOTLIGHT

Against the background of increasing geopolitical and economic risks today in a globalized world, we need knowledgeable and talented leaders for global governance to achieve peace and prosperity by minimizing those risks. *Japan SPOTLIGHT* had the honor to have an interview with Prof. Takashi Inoguchi, president of the University of Niigata Prefecture and distinguished emeritus professor of international political science at the University of Tokyo, on the future of global governance. Widely known as an expert in international political science, in particular in Asian politics, Prof. Inoguchi tells us what he believes are the keys to successful leadership in global governance.

Asia as Global Governance Leader

JS: We are currently witnessing a significant increase of risks in the world, geopolitical ones as well as economic ones: the slowdown in Chinese economic growth, political tensions and the increasing risk of terrorism in the Middle East, the economic and political risks brought about by the drastic decline in oil prices, the migrant crisis affecting the coherence of the European Union, etc. Such a wide range of risks rising simultaneously remind us of the urgent need of global leadership to deal with them appropriately. The G7 or G20 would certainly be relevant venues for addressing those issues. However, regional entities like the EU or various Asian cooperation schemes are now expected to play a larger role in the management of such risks, based on the assumption that the United States is becoming less ready to take the leadership role in global governance. What do you think of this observation?

Inoguchi: We are definitely facing high uncertainty, instability and



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vulnerability. This is certainly brought to us by globalization, in which many unexpected incidents can often happen due to the intertwined cause-and-effect relations among the nations. How to control them is a key to global governance. In our globalized world, any risk could be global and could affect our daily life so rapidly, and we cannot clearly discern how it will affect our life. It is a big issue how to handle this.

In talking about regional governance that could contribute to global governance in that sense, Asian regional governance is not well organized yet to do so. Japan, China and South Korea are always in conflicting situations. The ASEAN community has existed for 40 years but each of its member

countries has its own national identity and refrains from intervening in the others' domestic politics. South Asian regional cooperation is still in a primitive stage, and in Central Asia the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, founded in 2001, consists of only six members, Russia and China among them.

Anyhow, overall in Asia we do not yet have a confirmed framework of regional governance assured by rules or resources. I do not think we can achieve a solid rule or framework for regional governance in Asia anytime soon.

However, in this region we can see three positive developments. First, an explosive increase in scientific research papers. As science

and technology advance, we would need an organization to implement new developments. Second, GDP per capita is increasing in this region, which will help fund resources for organizations involved in regional governance. And third, many people in most Asian countries, except Japan, can speak English quite well, and the Japanese will probably speak fluent English in due course. Since all international conferences are conducted in English, more and more people are realizing that they will be lost unless they speak English.

With these three positive factors, Asians are well equipped with fundamental competencies and therefore I am rather optimistic about Asia's contribution to global governance from the long-term perspective.

In thinking about Japan's possible contribution to such regional governance, we should change the balance of human resources stationed overseas from the US to Asia. We Japanese, like Americans, are rather insular minded and do not care so much about international affairs. This attitude should be changed. As I said, we are preparing for regional and global governance in the long run, but these efforts have just begun. "Never at Home Abroad" is the provisional title of my forthcoming book on Japan and international affairs. Unless we change this attitude towards international affairs, we cannot achieve it well.

To achieve good regional or global governance we will need organizations with great expertise to provide national leaders with detailed policy options on the basis of objective and scientific analysis. We must ensure that there will be good proposals for regional governance emerging from discussions by policy experts at international meetings. Once a consensus is achieved at such meetings, each nation's government officials should work on convincing their ministries of the utility of accepting it. To make this go smoothly, we will need a national team of experts and pundits beyond their own ministries' specific interests to participate in these international discussions as a Japanese delegation.

JS: I guess it would take a long time to establish such an international organization in Asia. On the other hand, the TPP negotiations have concluded, although we have to wait and see if the US will ratify the deal. But this conclusion could prompt other Asia-wide mega-regional FTAs and eventually lead to the FTAAP (APEC FTA).

Inoguchi: Yes, if all goes well, that could happen. In addition, the TPP could encourage all other regional or bilateral FTA negotiations as well. However, in the worst case, due to the ongoing recession worldwide, all may not go well. Even the US, which has been leading TPP negotiations, might fail to ratify it. It is also up to the major member countries' economic performance from now on whether the TPP will achieve success or not. If those nations, such as the US and Japan, do not show good economic performances within a few years of its taking effect, the TPP would not have any encouraging impact upon other FTA negotiations. The US must show initiative in promoting free trade as a rule of global governance by smooth

ratification of the TPP. Japan should complement US leadership not only in trade liberalization but also in the other domains of global governance.

I have a concern about Japan's readiness to work on international activities. For example, in the area of science and technology, though there are so many research papers coming out of Japan, there are not so many Japanese scientists working in the US, fewer than Chinese, Indians and Iranians. Since the US is still at the center of global science and technology, the number of scientists working there can be regarded as a barometer of a nation's closeness to the most advanced scientific developments.

While there are many nuclear energy experts in the US with American nationality who originally came there from India, China or Iran, there are no Japanese American experts on nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Japanese experts are not mingling with other peoples. That is the most worrying point about Japan's potential contribution to global governance. This is not a problem with English. They simply do not like going overseas and staying there long enough to be a part of the community. Hence "Never at Home Abroad".

Encouraging Japanese Open-mindedness

JS: Should we invite more academics to Japanese institutes to help us become more internationally minded so that we would enjoy working with other nationalities more?

Inoguchi: No, I think we Japanese should go abroad. We should encourage more undergraduate and graduate students at universities to go abroad and train themselves in a severe environment outside Japan. The hardship of an academic life in a foreign country would create an expert who could work with people from different nations and gain the skills of good communication in the globalized world.

In particular, we will need such people in the domain of highly advanced natural sciences, since innovation or R&D is a key to





business success today. We will need such people particularly at doctoral level, given that global competition among business firms is based on the need for creativity and uniqueness. Japanese university education does seem to fail to produce such creative human resources in the field of natural sciences, in particular. As we invest lots of money in the education of academics in natural sciences, we should bear in mind that the benefits of such investment should be confirmed in comparison with the results.

Japan will need to produce more creative and internationally friendly experts in natural sciences to make a good contribution to an expertise-based international institute, a foundation of global governance on any issue such as trade, intellectual property rights, health and welfare. To develop such human resources we should send more young experts overseas to work independently from Japanese national interests. In the case of government officials, for example, dispatched from ministries to an international organization, they should not put forward their ministry's own parochial interests related to their work in that organization, as well as Japan's narrower national interests, and genuinely work for the global broader interest.

JS: Business firms can lose out to competition if they do not adjust to globalization. For this purpose, some large Japanese enterprises have today made it obligatory for their employees to stay abroad and work there for a certain period of time.

Inoguchi: I do not think that would be the best way to achieve the original purpose. I believe it is important for intellectuals to stay abroad and work in the international community. If we make it obligatory to work abroad in a business firm or whatever, there would be many more non-intellectuals going abroad. When a Japanese company sets up a local business in a host country, generally only local people work there. This may work well, but there would be no Japanese going to work for that subsidiary and if the company obliges employees to work overseas under such circumstances, only the less smart people would go, since the truly

smart people would hesitate to work there. Likewise, if we found an international institute for regional governance, only local people would work there and lead the institute, and if it became obligatory for Japanese officials to join the institute they would not necessarily be the best and the brightest sent by the Japanese government. To make meaningful contributions to global governance we should have the best and brightest working for such international institutes, especially scientists. Knowledge and expertise in natural sciences must be a minimum requirement for working in international organizations.

Emergence of China

JS: It is important to think about how to deal with the emergence of China in terms of global governance. What do you think about the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) initiated by China?

Inoguchi: I would say it is better for Japan to join it. Discussions among experts in such an international organization would be useful in restraining China from resorting to political means to resolve all kinds of policy issues under the economic turbulence it is now undergoing. They would instead consider higher scientific knowledge and analysis, and that would discourage unreasonable political decisions. It would be useful for Japan to join it in order to encourage such respect for scientific and objective decision making in China. There is of course a risk in joining it, since China would try to dominate the decision-making process, assuming that the AIIB would be under its influence. If Japan or any other developed nation joins it, they would need to observe strictly the international rules on investment and financing of infrastructure projects. This would prevent China from neglecting those rules and behaving rather arbitrarily in promoting aid policies for developing nations.

JS: For example, China might promote aid simply to get rid of its excessive production facilities due to overinvestment in the past.

Inoguchi: Yes, that would be a possibility. In comparing the potential for good contributions to global governance between Japan and China, it is no exaggeration to say that Japanese government officials and businessmen tend to be stationed concentratedly in Washington or other big American cities, whereas many businessmen and other private citizens from China are scattered among many nations. For example, 1 million Chinese are living in Africa, whereas only 6,000 Japanese live there.

JS: We should change this trend, otherwise we cannot change to a “regime maker” from a “regime taker”.

Inoguchi: Yes, and in addition we should do our best to enhance our intellectual capacity to work well in international organizations or conferences. Intellectuals with one or two PhDs should join such

organizations. In the case of FTA negotiations as well, experts on international trade should be working on them. Otherwise, we cannot achieve agreements truly beneficial for our country.

JS: A good way for Japan to maintain a key position in Asia may be to establish better relations with China, so various attempts to help China deal with its air or water pollution problems might be highly appreciated and improve relations. A bilateral policy dialogue on environmental protection measures could be one such attempt. Helping maintain US influence in Asia as a countervailing power would be another strategy to address the possible threat of an emerging China. But the former would be more important, wouldn't it?

Inoguchi: Well, I think even though China would truly appreciate it, it probably would not say any word of appreciation in public. It is true that China is under tremendously strong pressure to stop pollution and measure the degree of pollution all over the country. It says coal is its best source of energy and builds factories that use only coal in Hainan Island or Inner Mongolia and the pollution level in those regions is now the same as in the worst areas. So giving advice to the Chinese government on how to mitigate pollution would be greatly appreciated by China, but it would be reluctant to admit publicly that Japan's assistance and advice were truly helpful. The Chinese people would criticize their government for being incompetent in mitigating pollution if it admitted it openly.

I do not think we can be so optimistic about the possible improvement in relations between China and Japan by such environmental cooperation. It is good to think about China-Japan relations in the future and how they can be improved, rather than thinking only about Japan-US relations as central to Japan's contribution to global governance. But we would need a balance between those two foreign policies, thinking highly of relations with both countries.

Political Populism

JS: In addition to economic and geopolitical risks, we are also seeing an increasing populism in domestic politics all over the world, with the surge in support for candidates with some extreme views, such as Donald Trump in the US or Marine Le Pen in France. How to cope with this trend could be a big question for the future of democracy.

Inoguchi: Even if a moderate and reasonable politician is elected president, he or she might take some extreme positions to a certain extent in order to retain their popularity as much as possible, since they cannot ignore the populist views of the masses.

JS: There are so many challenges for global governance such as the environment and income

inequality that are sometimes referred to as a crisis of capitalism. On the other hand, we have in domestic politics this new phenomenon of populism marked by extreme views against racial minorities, which could be interpreted as a crisis of democracy.

Inoguchi: We should make multilateral agreements on the global environment or income inequality play a more important role in each country's domestic politics. For example, we should set up certain targets in these agreements and encourage each government to pursue them. There are two kinds of multilateral agreement. One is a non-binding one setting an ideal goal, like annihilation of pandemics or reduction of poverty. The other is a binding one, such as an extradition treaty for exchanging criminals or a tax treaty to avoid double taxation among nations. We should take advantage of the first type to encourage each nation's domestic political culture, whether it is dominated by populist views or not, to respect the international consensus agreed upon by intellectuals. This is a kind of utilization of peer pressure. Unless we have such intellectual experts in international organizations or outside of national governments we will not be able to have good domestic politics or good global governance.

JS: Your "AsiaBarometer" survey is a kind of benchmark to enable us to compare numerical indicators for social domestic issues, such as income inequality, among Asian countries. Is this an attempt to create a sort of peer pressure internationally to improve each nation's domestic performance?

Inoguchi: It is not pressure but a framework for enabling international public opinion to be respected. This, I believe, can only be done on a private basis, not by governments. Government officials are good at law making and thus only compliance is respected. Entrepreneurship is not highly encouraged in their work.

JS: In summary, then, do you think Japan should complement the role of the US in achieving relevant global governance against the backdrop of an emerging China?

Inoguchi: We should send more experts to international organizations in order to make a substantive contribution to the activities of these organizations. There must be more Japanese government officials with policy expertise staying and working permanently for them. Younger Japanese academics should also spend many years abroad at universities or institutes to enhance their expertise. This is our best way to make a good contribution to global governance. **JS**

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