

IN THIS ISSUE:

Hot Issue

Tracking the Changing Face of Islam in Southeast Asia

In November last year, a symposium was held in Singapore to discuss how globalization has been influencing Islamic societies in Southeast Asia. The changing social standpoints of Southeast Asian Muslims due to globalization were among the themes discussed. Senior Research Fellow Takaaki Oiwa speaks in detail.

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Indonesian Muslims at prayer

Photo: Kenshiro Imamura (JICA)

Reviews

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Climate Change Adaptation in Asian Coastal Cities

Research Fellow Megumi Muto presents her study on the Impacts of Climate Change on Asian Coastal Cities at a conference in Thailand. Her work, which simulates flood scenarios and infrastructure defects, has already been adopted by Manila urban planners.

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Reviews

Looking into Development Projects: From the Villagers' Point of View

Senior Research Fellow Atsushi Hanatani recently returned from a 3-month stay in Senegal to conduct research on water resource management and community-building. While living with the villagers, he studied the status of the water systems, user associations, and other related local conditions.

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Reviews

JICA-RI Research Fellows Takeuchi and Sawada Win Academic Awards

In November 2009, Senior Research Fellow Shinichi Takeuchi won both the 31st Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities and the 13th Okita Memorial Prize for International Development Research. Visiting Fellow Yasuyuki Sawada won the 2nd Enjoji Jiro Memorial Prize for his work in economics.

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Tracking the Changing Face of Islam in Southeast Asia

Globalization has been making an impact in Southeast Asia's Islamic world. Though Islamic societies have generally been espousing globalization's lucrative markets, there are signs of growing anti-secularism in certain Muslim groups in the region.

Such social changes in Islam from globalization directly impact the institutions and public policies within Southeast Asia, thinks JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Takaaki Oiwa, and he believes it is necessary to track these changes to provide input for more informed policy decisions on development and international cooperation that take into account distinctions of Islamic societies.



Takaaki Oiwa, Senior Research Fellow

Oiwa is coordinator for a project that investigates the changes in Islam and its social position in Southeast Asia entitled "Locating Islam in Southeast Asia," a collaboration between JICA-RI and universities and organizations across the region. In the project, international experts, both Muslim and non-Muslim, carry out research individually, the results of which are then construed and presented in subsequent symposia.

Oiwa traveled to Singapore from November 21-22 to organize the second of three symposia on Southeast Asian Muslims' responses to globalization. Fifteen international experts presented on and discussed topics under three themes: the movement and spread of Southeast Asian Muslims, how Muslims are reacting to globalization trends, and regional comparisons among nation-states. The presentations covered such topics as anti-modern sentiment, Muslim minority issues, conflict and peace-building, and democratization in Islamic politics. Ensuing discussions included globalization's effects on Islamic education, and the concept and basis for *jihad*, among others.

The discussants concluded that further definition of "modernization" in a Southeast Asia Muslim context would be needed for a more accurate and culturally-specific understanding.

As part of the research, Oiwa is also preparing a survey aimed at exploring differences in opinion on globalization among the Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia (Muslim majority countries), the Philippines and Thailand (Muslim minority countries). The survey and interview-based investigation will contrast Muslim and non-Muslim opinion within each of and among the four countries. Oiwa also anticipates differences in opinion among the various Muslim groups, particularly in areas where Islamic societies are more marginalized. Oiwa plans to integrate the findings of this survey with the research of the symposium participants to provide a more accurate account of Muslims in the region. The survey will be conducted in January of 2010 with results to be analyzed by mid-year.

The papers of the symposium participants will be finalized and presented at the third symposium in mid-2010.

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Climate Change Adaptation in Asian Coastal Cities

In response to the potential disastrous effects cited in the 4th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), JICA-RI Research Fellow Megumi Muto is studying the direct and indirect impacts of increased flooding in Asian coastal cities.

Muto's research project is a quantitative simulation analysis that combines climatic, hydro-analytic and socio-economic methodologies. This multidisciplinary, collaborative research project with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, and with academic support from the University of Tokyo, Ibaraki University and Ateneo de Manila University, is an effort to produce policy recommendations to Asian urban planners.

What differentiates her project is that, instead of using average global temperature figures, it incorporates several IPCC models to "downscale" the probable level of temperature increase in 2050 for various Asian coastal cities. With added precipitation analysis, river hydro-analysis, sea level rise and storm surge, specific flooding maps are generated for various climate scenarios. Combined with flood control-related infrastructure data on the ground, damage assessment to commercial and residential buildings, roads, vehicles, and even indirect costs like commuter travel times and income losses are estimated. At present, Muto is focusing on Manila as a case study while her partners assess Ho Chi Minh City and Bangkok. The team is now comparing the characteristics and the magnitudes of flood damage anticipated for 2050 in these cities. Though yet incomplete, the results of the project are already being used in Manila to plan new rounds of infrastructure-related projects and policy advisory activities.

Muto recently attended the International Conference on Sustainability Science in Asia (ICSS-Asia) held in Thailand from November 23-24 to present her ongoing research. ICSS is a platform for sharing knowledge on the present status and approaches for sustainable development, and for linking academic institutions with international aid agencies for knowledge development.

In her [presentation](#), she explained her research to academics, researchers and policy-makers, stressing a multidisciplinary approach to analyze the damage and the necessary adaptation measures under climate change. "Climate change is not a one-discipline type of issue... the important thing is to bring all disciplines together...this is congruent with the aim of sustainability science."



Megumi Muto, Research Fellow

Upon completion of the project, JICA, ADB and the World Bank will construe all city studies into one synthesis report planned for dissemination in 2010. Presently the IPCC is preparing discussions for its 5th Assessment Report and Muto hopes to offer to the panel a case study with real number assessment on economic damage.

Looking into Development Projects: From the Villagers' Point of View

“Management of Water User’s Associations and Formation of Collaborative Local Society in Rural Africa” is the title of the research project in which JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Atsushi Hanatani serves as head. From September to December 2009, he stayed in four villages in the region of Tambacounda in southeast Senegal. While living together with the villagers, he studied the conditions of the maintenance and management of the water supply systems (i.e., residential deep-tube well water supply systems operated by hand pumps and motorized pumps).



A Senegalese community water point

In Senegal, donors are supporting establishment of water supply facilities and the water users’ associations called “Association des Usagers des Forages” (Deep Well Users’ Association), including JICA’s “Safe Water and Support for Community Activities” project (now in phase 2). This research project, which views a water supply system as a “local common pool resource,” is intended to identify factors and processes that lead to sustainable maintenance and management systems, which is also one of the objectives pursued by the JICA project.

Due to reasons relating to water resource endowments and management of the water supply system, this study confirmed some cases where users continue to use unsafe water from

shallow wells. Hanatani is currently analyzing the factors affecting the users’ preference of water source, the actual status of the management system, and their relations with the socio-economic backgrounds of the village society among others.

Reviews

Research Fellows Takeuchi and Sawada Win Academic Awards

In November 2009, JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Shinichi Takeuchi and Visiting Fellow Yasuyuki Sawada (University of Tokyo) received academic awards.

For his recently-published book, *The Post-Colonial Patrimonial State and Conflict in Africa: Understanding the Genocide in Rwanda* (Akashi Shoten, 2009), Takeuchi received the [31st Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities](#) in the Politics & Economics category from the Suntory Foundation. Takeuchi also won the [13th Okita Memorial Prize for International Development Research](#) from the Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development.

Sawada’s multidimensional and empirical research on such subjects as how natural disasters affect people’s lives, and how economic conditions relate to suicide, won him the [2nd Enjoji Jiro Memorial Prize](#), awarded by the Japan Center for Economic Research.