

Hopes and Demands for the PIE

by Prof. Ryoshin Minami

Participating in the 1st and 2nd PIE general assembly has assured me that the Project is progressing as planned. This is the result of hard work by project leaders/members. Following are my candid comments.

First, members must be more intensely conscious of the Project goal: "analysis of intergenerational equity." Education, health care and pensions are all in themselves important topics, but I would like to see empirical analyses of each topic's relation to intergenerational equity and how critical they are. Simply taking up these topics does not constitute an analysis of intergenerational equity.

Second, intergenerational conflicts would not exist when there is a healthy family institution. They only surface in the age of the nuclear family. Thus historical/comparative international research on family institution becomes important, requiring the cooperation of sociologists.

Third, the history of mankind has had various conflicts leading to societal insecurity. The new phenomena of intergenerational inequity must also be located in history. Also in developing countries, there are severe religious and urban-rural conflicts and intergenerational conflicts are not apparent. For example in China the biggest problem is the regional or urban-rural conflicts.

This project responds to the present/near-future urgent problem, and the expectations for research results are high. I wish for further development.

Health Insurance Reform

On the 12th-13th December 2002, the international workshop on Health Insurance Reform was held at the Health Care Science Institute, Akasaka, Tokyo. The invited guests included: Prof. T. Hitiris (Univ. of York), Mr. W. Looney (Pfizer, Inc., USA), Mr. J. Jo (Institute for Health and Social Affairs, Korea) and Prof. K. Choi (Hankuk Univ.). Prof. K. Choi is the former Minister of Health and Welfare of Korea.

The workshop focused on intergenerational equity in health and nursing care. Along with the aforementioned guests, Professors H. Ogata (Kyushu Univ.) and T. Tokita (Hitotsubashi Univ.) joined as reporters and lively debates ensued.

The importance of UK's NHS reform is in ameliorating the faults while taking over the market-oriented policy of the previous cabinet, it was reported. Key topics of the debates in the US included the quality improvements of medical services and pharmaceuticals and the regression in coverage and government intervention. Reports by Hitiris, Looney and Jo-Choi are available as PIE DP series, and the Tokita report is published in *PharmacoEconomics*.



Professor Minami



Professor Takayama

Prof. Takayama's Keynote Address on the PRC Pension Reform

On the 10th January, 2003, the MOLSS/ADB workshop on Pension Reform of PRC was held in Dalian, China. Prof. N. Takayama (Hitotsubashi Univ.) participated as the keynote speaker, stating that "the new system (2nd-tier) introduced in PRC in 1997 virtually operates as a defined-benefit PAYG pension, rather than a funded defined-contribution one." It was followed by vibrant opinion-exchanges among the pension researchers and government officials of PRC.

Pensions in Transition Economies

The third international workshop on Intergenerational Equity in Transition Economies was held on the 22nd February, 2003, at Sano-shoin, Kunitachi, Tokyo. A thorough discussion took place on the problems and future reform plans of the former USSR and central/eastern European countries.

The panelists were Prof. M. Gora (Warsaw Univ. of Economics), Mr. P. Antosik (Czech: Mercer Human Resource Consulting), Dr. G. R. Ivan (Hungary: TARKI Social Research Center), Dr. S. Zsuzsa (Hungary: Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Professors R. Shadiev (Uzbekistan: University of World Economy and Diplomacy) and B. Islamov (Uzbekistan Banking and Financial Academy), Dr. Ai-Gul Seitenova (Kazakhstan: The Pragma Corporation), Prof. A. Uegaki (Seinan Gakuin Univ.), Dr. V. Vasile (Romanian Academy of Sciences) and Mr. S. Afanasiev (Ministry of Labor of Russian Federation). The revised reports will be published as PIE DP series or in the *Economic Review*.



Workshop on Health Insurance Reform



Professor Gora