Taking a global view of state-society relations

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1. What inspired you to become a professor? I was originally interested in becoming a practitioner working in developing countries or in international organizations. When I had my internship at the World Bank as a graduate student, I realized that I never had a doctoral degree. A teaching opportunity came unexpectedly after my dissertation.

2. Any major differences teaching in Japan versus the U.S.? Students in the U.S. are more demanding in a good way. They also talk a lot in discussion. In general, at Princeton University there’s more intensity in the classroom.

3. The centennial Japanese style seminar is a central part of higher education. How do you create a harmonious group? I don’t have a definite plan. I have some offices occasionally at my place, and offer up my cooking and also enjoy the cooking of my students. We also go for semi-trips.

4. How has the University of Tokyo handled going digital? I only teach graduate students so the class size is limited, but other faculty members must be going through a lot of hardships. It is difficult to teach when you don’t have the feel of how the students are responding.

5. What was the most memorable lecture you’ve given? A public lecture I gave at the local elementary school in Princeton, New Jersey, immediately after the 3.11 tsunami in 2011. There were many people who had never seen it. I was interested to learn what a tsunami and its devastating impact on people was, and what they could do to help. I was touched.

6. How would you describe your research to someone outside of your field? I am involved in the study of how people have struggled to improve energy access and how outsiders play a role in either helping or harming such efforts, particularly in the context of Asia.

7. What are you studying right now? I am now studying the long-term impact of notorious projects funded by Japan in the 1980s in Southeast Asia and what happened to these projects. I am also working on the role of intermediary organization at a buffer stage to domestic resource management.

8. What are Japan’s key tactics for multinational cooperation? Unilateralism and nonpolitical approach has been relatively consistent. However, there has been some development assistance that now weaves into the area of national security.

9. Are they successful? It has been successful since Japan does not risk any conditions like others do in the West. But that principle may be more difficult if Japan turns its orientation more toward its own national interests.

10. What’s the biggest challenge to Japan’s international diplomacy? The biggest opportunity? Challenges The “my country first” approach a problem that really remains global cooperation. Opportunity There is no single superpower that dominates the earth, and that forces some countries to cooperate with others.

11. How do local communities react when governments strive to better allocate resources? They welcome such input as long as there is flexibility for the locals to customize and make adjustments to the initial allocation. Resources will be wasted if there is no prior consultation.

12. What’s the best way to provide assistance while preserving local autonomy? To question when the assistance will serve, and then have the courage to stop unnecessary assistance. We need to focus on what brought about the need for assistance to begin with.

13. What runs through your mind when you become president of Japan Academy Medal? How lucky I was. I think it’s a fact that my academic discipline is so ambiguous and unconventional.

14. Are we actually headed for a “Mad Max” future? I am not too pessimistic. Many people are rediscovering the meaning of work and family life.

15. How will COVID-19 impact the international landscape? We are unintentionally saving a lot of fossil fuel by not traveling. Orientation is toward the local.

16. What can the average person do to prevent water waste? Probably shorten their shower time.

17. What three things are always in your fridge? Bottled water, fresh fish, and I like to have sambal chili oil, available in the U.S., thank God and pour. Sambal is my recent discovery, as recommended by my daughter.

18. Do you collect anything? I used to collect old maps from places I actually visited. The problem is that there is not enough wall to hang them on.

19. What advice would you give to your younger self? I would tell myself to be less and be more country.

20. What Japanese food do you miss most? I would say wasabi (green). Good wasabi is difficult to find even in New York City.

Universal Sunday Crossword: Pros and cons by Trent H. Evans

Solutions on page 15

Sudoku

http://www.chillicothe.sudoku

Find the 7 words that make up each 7 across. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter can only be used once, and the solutions must be entered in the grid to complete the puzzles.

CUBES
1. ancient Mediterranean ship (6)
2. have in one hand (4)
3. brief conversations (5)
4. stars alternative (8)
5. what the ship’s wheel turns (5)
6. improves, with “it” (4)
7. hydroelectricity generators (8)

RU HO EL OR GAL
ES DD LEY ES EV
SL WI ER LD AT
TU AI IN NG RB