

**Workshop 2009**

**Preparing Future Faculty: An Introduction to Teaching and Writing for Graduate Students (March 18-24, 2010)**

**Session 6. Panel Discussions: International Career Planning for Japanese and Non-Japanese Graduate Students of HU (March 19, 2010)**

**Panelist: Hiko Tamashiro**

## A Roadmap to the United Nations

— Special Reference to World Health Organization —

Hiko Tamashiro\* and Romeo B. Lee

Graduate School of Medicine, Hokkaido University

(Received on 17 September, 2010)

### 1. Introduction

Japanese people, especially young students, are keenly interested to work for global organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) agencies (Japan Model United Nations Society, 2009). However, most of them have scarce or incomplete strategic information regarding the UN organizations particularly that related to employment application. Qualified Japanese nationals may have an edge to be considered for the UN because Japan has a low representation in many UN agencies. This report provides some know-how towards securing a position at the UN.

### 2. Available job opportunities and where to look for them

There are three ways of applying for the UN agencies. Locally, the most up-to-date information on recruitment can be obtained from the International Recruitment Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo (<http://www.mofa-irc.go.jp/>).

If one has a specific UN agency in mind, he or she may go directly to the website of said agency to look for vacancy posts. For example, the website for the international professional staff recruitment of the World

**Table 1. Job Categories at the UN for Japanese Citizens**

1	Junior Professional Officer/Associate Expert (JPO/AE)
2	National Competitive Recruitment Examination
3	Vacancy Posts
4	Special Recruit Missions
5	Secondment from the Government
6	Political Appointment
7	Consultants

\*<sup>1</sup>) Correspondence: Department of Global Health and Epidemiology, Division of Preventive Medicine, Graduate School of Medicine, Hokkaido University, Kita 15 Nishi 7 Kita-ku, Sapporo 060-8638, Japan  
Email: tamashiro@med.hokudai.ac.jp

Health Organization (WHO) is <http://www.who.int/employment/vacancies/> with the contact email address at [erecruit@who.int](mailto:erecruit@who.int). If one wishes to get a broad idea of the jobs at the entire UN system, he or she may visit <http://unjobs.org/>.

There are usually two categories of staff members at the UN: professional and general. Professional staff members deal with substantive and scientific issues while the general personnel work on administrative requirements of both the organization in general and the professional staff in particular. **Table 1** shows that there are seven categories of positions at the UN for Japanese nationals.

Given its numbers of available posts and applications and its demand for high-level technical competencies among its applicants, the UN has a fiercely competitive process of recruiting and selecting its professional staff. UN professional personnel are not academic scholars but they represent an excellent crop of scientific and technical specialists with substantive skills and experiences.

### 3. Characteristics of people UN agencies are looking for

Exactly what attributes the UN organizations look for in applicants? Let's look at the recruitment policy of the WHO. **Table 2** lists the desired characteristics of staff of WHO when it recruits its staff. On the whole, WHO places premium on the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity for selecting and employing staff.

**Table 3** lists the recruitment principles of WHO. Staff selection is made on a competitive basis, taking into account geographical and gender balance. As mentioned, Japan is under-represented in the UN agencies; as such, Japanese nationals, especially women, are given a high priority of being selected.

For recruitment, interview plays a very important role in securing a position at WHO. One must therefore prepare himself or herself when facing a crucial interview—for

**Table 2. WHO job applicants should:**

---

- Demonstrate a high level of technical knowledge.
- Be motivated and have a strong commitment to the policies and programmes of WHO.
- Possess good analytical skills and a keen interest in and an understanding of policy issues especially in the area of public health.
- Be able to work well in a multicultural team.
- Have working experience at national and/or international level, in a field relevant to WHO's work.
- Be proficient in at least one of the official languages of the Organization (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and have a working knowledge of a second. Additional languages are an asset.

---

Source: <http://www.who.int/employment/recruitment/en/>

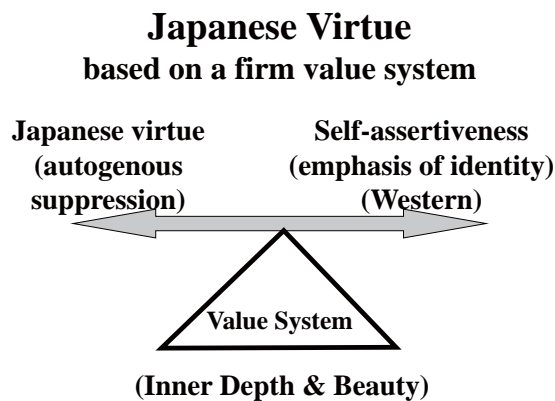
**Table 3. WHO's recruitment policy**

---

- We do not discriminate on any ground (race, creed or sex). We are committed to promoting diversity in our workforce.
- We aim to achieve a broad representation of member country nationals with particular emphasis on developing countries, and improve gender balance.
- We strive to provide an environment where the contribution of each individual is valued.
- Selection of staff is normally made on a competitive basis.

---

Source: <http://www.who.int/employment/recruitment/en/>



**Figure 1.** Japanese virtue based on a firm value

instance, one must be engineered at packaging his or her skills and experiences and must be able to communicate these in an assertive and professional manner.

WHO’s official languages consist of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. Neither Japanese nor German or Italian is included in these official languages. It is important to note that the most widely spoken language in WHO involves not any of the aforementioned official languages but the so-called “broken” or “international” English. This has an important implication for Japanese nationals who are non-native speakers of any of WHO’s official languages. To be able to communicate, Japanese staff must have a good command of “broken” English, which to our view is not a disadvantage but an endearing characteristic of non-English speaking but highly technically qualified international staff at the UN system.

Inazo NITOBÉ, who was in the second class of Hokkaido Agricultural College (now Hokkaido University) became an under-secretary general of the Leagues of the United Nations and had lofty and ambitious phrases, such as “A bridge across the Pacific!” and “Haste not rest not”. His views are based on Japanese culture and history and are very important in the international community. Among others, Nitobe’s views suggest the need for people—especially in UN agencies—to respect cultural, religious and other social diversities of non-English speaking but highly skilled and qualified

staff. “Oh my Buddha!” is one of the personal expressions that I (read: Hiko Tamashiro) use to keep and express my identity in the international community.

#### 4. Conclusion

Japanese citizens have a solid and firm value system (**Figure 1**). In applying and working for global organizations such as the UN agencies, it is not necessary for Japanese to be westernized. What is important is for one to have a firm self-confidence and to be imbued with one’s values and cultural standards.

There are many options in the UN agencies especially for Japanese young students and a wide window of opportunities awaits those who are interested!

#### References

Japan Model United Nations Society. (2009). Together UN campaign of MOFA Japan. Retrieved from [http://jmun.org/interviews/unu\\_09may\\_eng/](http://jmun.org/interviews/unu_09may_eng/)  
<http://www.mofa-irc.go.jp/>  
<http://www.who.int/employment/vacancies/>  
<http://unjjobs.org/>  
 玉城英彦 『世界へ翔ぶ—国連職員をめざすあなたへ—』 彩流社、2009年。



『A Road-map to the United Nations』  
 ~Special Reference to WHO~

Hiko TAMASHIRO  
 Department of Global Health and Epidemiology  
 Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine

## Road-maps to WHO

1. Junior Professional Officer/Associate Expert (JPO/AE): <35 yrs
2. National Competitive Recruitment Examination : <32 yrs 国連職員採用競争試験
3. Vacancy Posts(空席ポスト)
4. Special Recruit Missions(特別採用ミッション)
5. Secondment from the Government(出向)
6. Political Appointment(政治特別ポスト)
7. Consultants

### MOFA

#### International Recruitment Center

「外務省国連人事センター」

<http://www.mofa-irc.go.jp/>  
 E-mail: [jinji-center@mofa-irc.go.jp](mailto:jinji-center@mofa-irc.go.jp)

### •UN Agencies

- Specialized agencies  
 ✓WHO, ILO, UNICEF, etc.
- Non-specialized agencies  
 ➢UNHCR, UNV, etc.

### •UN Staff

- P staff
- G staff

### Interview

- ・ Sell
- Advertise
- Advocate

“Assertively”

## Geneva, Switzerland

Geneva



UN European HQ



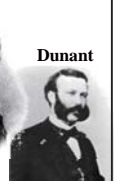
Protestant Reformation



Rousseau





Voltaire



Dunant



**The United Nations**

Welcomes	Welcomes
English	French
ترحيب	русский
Arabic	Russian
歡迎光臨	испанский
Chinese	Spanish

**The Most Widely Spoken Language in the World?**

**Arabic? Chinese? English?**

**French? Spanish?**

**or Japanese?**

**“Broken English!”**



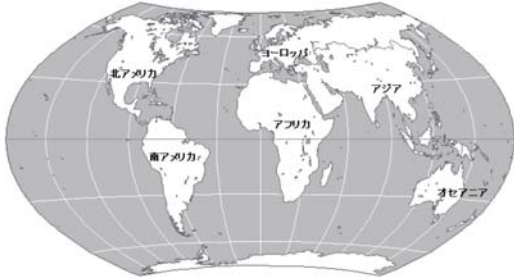
**新渡戸稲造文庫目録**  
CATALOGUE OF  
INAZO NITOBÉ LIBRARY

[http://chiri.let.hokudai.ac.jp/~you/nitobe/data/index\\_e.htm](http://chiri.let.hokudai.ac.jp/~you/nitobe/data/index_e.htm)

**A Bridge across the Pacific!**

**“Haste Not Rest Not”**

**Which way do you cut the cake?**



**“Japan = Far East”**

## Different Religions & Religious Outlooks

Oh, My God!

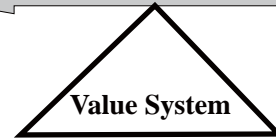
Oh, Jesus Christ!

“Oh, My Buddha!”

## Japanese Virtue based on a firm value system

Japanese virtue  
(autogenous  
suppression)

Self-assertiveness  
(emphasis of identity)  
(Western)



(Inner Depth & Beauty)



## Conclusions

1. Understandable language skills but the maximum imagination
2. Wrestle at your own sumo ring (arena)
3. Act naturally, don't pretend!
4. Act now and think tomorrow! (act instinctively!)
5. Different rules for appraisal among the countries/agencies
6. Those who have the poor achievement in Japan “go abroad!”
7. Competence applicable for foreign countries?
8. Chance favors a prepared mind!

### Reference :

Hiko Tamashiro: (玉城英彦)  
『世界へ翔ぶ一国連職員をめざす  
あなたへ』  
彩流社、2009年