

**Japan's Path to Development and Lessons for South Sudan:
Personal Observations**

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1. Introduction

It is a great honour and privilege for me to be invited by the Sudd Institute and the University of Juba to make a presentation at this public forum with distinguished moderator and discussants today. Taking this opportunity, I would like to renew my sincere appreciation to the University of Juba for kindly having awarded me, acting on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, Honorary Doctorate in International Relations.

Since this Honorary Doctorate was to express appreciation for Japan's approach to development cooperation in South Sudan, I regard it an obligation to share my thought about what experiences, ideas and lessons Japan can offer for the development of South Sudan before I leave my post later this month. The theme of today's public forum that the University of Juba suggested, therefore, was exactly what I wanted to take up for discussion with you all today.

I must admit that I am not an academic and that my analytical capability is rather limited. Nevertheless, I have an advantage of having spent about two years and a half in South Sudan to meet so many South Sudanese with various backgrounds and to work on so many development projects. Thus, I may be one of the most qualified Japanese to talk about this topic.

2. Japan's Path to Development

(Japan as a developing country 150 years ago)

Let me start with Japan's path to development. Japan was a developing country 150 years ago, when it was forced to open its doors to the Western powers, which enjoyed by that time far greater military and economic strength. It was during the period of rising imperialism in the latter half of the 19th century, when non-Western countries throughout the world were colonized one after another. Japan was one of the very few that managed to survive.

Please allow me to refer to academic works of Prof. Ohno Kenichi, "Globalization of Developing Countries" (in Japanese) in 2000 and "The Path Traveled by Japan as a Developing Country" (in English) in 2005 (<http://www.grips.ac.jp/forum/pdf06/EDJ.pdf>).

He listed seven assets that Japan had nurtured during the Edo period just before the opening of the country, which are as follows:

- (1) Political unity and stability
- (2) Agricultural development
- (3) Transport network and economic integration of the country
- (4) Expansion of commodity exchange market
- (5) Development of financial mechanism and the rise of rich merchants
- (6) Industrial development efforts by local governments
- (7) Spread of education opportunities

Blessed with such assets, Japan struggled hard to transform and modernize its traditional political, economic and social systems to cope with the new global environment. Faced with enormous military and economic gaps, Japan had no choice but to accept the reality of the world and to do its very best in order to survive. Different from nowadays, there was no development cooperation.

Still, Japan possessed entrepreneurs with aspiration. Ingenuity of the private sector was a blessing. Support from the government for industrial development was also a positive factor. The combination of such elements

ignited the rapid economic growth after the opening of the country.

(Flexibility, generosity and pragmatism to absorb new elements from outside)

At that time in history, as also in later dates, the core challenge was how to adapt itself, i.e., its traditional political, economic and social systems, to the new realities of the globalized world. "Some governments refused to deal with the external world and revert to isolation, economic control and the rejection of Western ideas. Other governments rush to embrace the imposed principles of free trade and Western democracy uncritically. Both reaction patterns are shallow, extreme and unadvisable. Translative adaptation requires much deeper thinking by the top policy makers. It is indeed a very difficult task." As Ohno said in 2005.

The Japanese were flexible, generous and pragmatic, and was successful in responding to the external pressure through "translative adaptation". This approach was the key to success. It means that foreign ideas and systems are introduced not in the original form but with modifications to fit local needs, thus the transformed country is not really so weak or passive. In this way, Japan retained its political, economic and social strength, survived the difficult period and achieved industrialization.

Prof. Ohno's belief, based on his study, is that "With great leadership and ideas, a new way of development suitable for each country should be found. Moreover, there should be more than one path to development in response to different initial conditions and shifting historical circumstances." The modality of "translative adaptation" varies from country to country.

In this sense, I believe that Japan is a good model to inspire any developing countries, including South Sudan, to consider how foreign ideas and systems can be best modified and incorporated for transformational development.

(Japan's experience of development cooperation)

Another significant experience that Japan can share with South Sudan is

its experience of development cooperation. As you may know, Asian countries achieved rapid economic development in the latter half of the 20th century, which was called “Asian Miracle”. It was Japan’s support that was instrumental in making this miracle possible. As a matter of fact, this paved the way for the creation of TICAD process and Japan’s support for Asia-Africa cooperation.

I would like to introduce the latest study of JICA Research Institute compiling the experiences and lessons learnt from Japan’s development Assistance. It was entitled “Japan’s Development Assistance: Foreign Aid and the Post-2015 Agenda”, edited by Kato Hiroshi, John Page and Shimomura Yasutami in 2016, which is also available on Kindle or e-book. One of the editors, Mr. Kato Hiroshi, the current Senior Vice President of JICA came to Juba in January last year.

This study highlighted a number of characteristics of Japan’s ODA: request-based principle, extensive use of loans, emphasis on economic infrastructure, shift from economic take-off to poverty reduction, emphasis on human resource development and field orientation, inclusive growth, and human security, among others.

The most fundamental among all these is the self-reliance principle or aid-to-end-aid principle, i.e., graduating recipient countries from aid dependence, which could only be accomplished by laying the foundation for sustained economic growth. This is a strong belief of the Japanese aid community, and this approach has been widely supported and welcomed by many developing countries.

3. Lessons for South Sudan

(Addressing the common challenge of translative adaptation)

What lessons, then, can South Sudan learn from Japan’s development and development cooperation experience? I must point out that there are a number of challenges in South Sudan which Japan did not face 150 years ago, such as serious tensions among various communities and groups, prevalence of

small arms, large need for education and for road- and river-transport network, among others. Nevertheless, there are also some distinct advantages that South Sudan can capitalize, such as rich oil and soil, network of highly-educated and experienced diasporas and returnees, and the resilience of the communities and the people,

With all such differences, South Sudan faces the common challenge with Japan 150 years ago: the need to adapt itself to a highly competitive global market despite severe resource and capacity gaps. “Translative adaptation” is necessary for South Sudan. Japan can inspire South Sudan as to the ways to interact with the international community. As I mentioned before, Japan’s flexibility, generosity and pragmatism in incorporating foreign ideas without friction or confrontation may be something that South Sudan can learn from.

(Promoting human security: community empowerment and protection)

Apart from such a general approach, some specific elements of Japan’s development experience are also effective in the current stage of South Sudan.

First, I noticed that the most needed support for sustainable development is livelihood: agriculture and vocational training. Japan works with various UN agencies, but we usually end up extending similar support to the communities for livelihood.

In the post-conflict environment, the government structure is difficult to function. Therefore, the best way to achieve recovery and stabilization is to support the economic and social functions at the community level so that people in such communities can stand on their own. This is what we call a human security approach, which Japan has been promoting for many years.

(Capacity- and institution-building)

The second element is capacity- and institution-building. Japan went through the period of institution-building in the late 19th century, when we adopted the latest science and technology of the West while retaining the existing social values and norms. We know that one-size-fits-all approach

cannot work.

JICA is supporting the capacity- and institution-building for science and mathematics training, vocational training, customs service, public media, and water supply system, among others. Japan also works with UN agencies for similar ventures, such as blood transfusion service with WHO, immigration service with IOM, police service and Public Financial Management with UNDP.

In addition, we believe in inspiring people. Japan started UNITAR Hiroshima South Sudan fellowship program for 20 to 25 South Sudanese young professionals from various organizations for management and leadership training every year, which includes a one-week trip to see the reconstruction of Hiroshima with their own eyes.

(Industrial development)

The third element is industrial development for economic growth. In the case of South Sudan, the major alternative industry to oil is agriculture, including fishery, livestock and agro-business. Japan has always regarded this as a major pillar and has long supported to formulate Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan (CAMP). CAMP was finally approved by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly this March.

For South Sudanese, exploitation of oil and mineral resources may be attractive in many ways, but they must be wisely used and their long-term sustainability needs to be considered.

Japan is also trying to sow the seed for further development through ABE Initiative scholarship with business internship opportunities. To my pleasure, South Sudanese are rated high among all applicants throughout Africa, winning a large number of seats.

4. Conclusion

I have outlined Japan's experience of development and development cooperation, from which lessons can be drawn for development of South Sudan.

I would like to conclude by suggesting a more valuable lesson that Japan learned from its history. That is the importance of leadership and their responsibility.

As I explained earlier, Japan survived the period of imperialism. It was not at all a natural outcome. Enlightened and dedicated leaders made that possible. Still, the succeeding leaders failed to take the course of international cooperation, led Japan to the Second World War, which we lost. We suffered a great deal. After the war, we chose the path to peace and achieved tremendous economic development. Japan now upholds the banner of “Proactive Contribution to Peace”, demonstrating its strong commitment here in South Sudan. As I read the history of Japan, what determines the fate of the nation is the quality of leaders from generation to generation. This is my personal observation, and I leave it to you whether it would apply to South Sudan.

I believe that you are present and future leaders of South Sudan in so many fields. The organizers of today’s event, the Sudd Institute and the University of Juba, are both fostering future leaders of this country.

After all, lessons are not something that I can give to you. Lessons are what you find out and what you make use of in your concrete actions in the future. It is my hope that today’s forum would be an opportunity for you to think of your potential as a leader to bring about peace and development in South Sudan.

(End)