

In Memory of Professor Harutoshi Funabashi

Ajiang CHEN

Department of Sociology/ Research Center for Environment and Society, Hohai University

On the morning of August 16th, 2014, I received an email from Professor Saburo Horikawa, he told me that Professor Funabashi passed away suddenly yesterday. I could not believe that it was real! I still have the impression that he had a good shape, and loved his work, he should have worked even longer - possibly into his 80s even 90s. I'd rather believe that Professor Saburo Horikawa might make a wrong mail. I still remember I had a conversation with Dr. Atsushi Hamamoto at the World Sociology Conference in Yokohama in July, 2014, just about one month before Professor Funabashi's passing away. I asked him how Japanese professors could stay healthy while working every night until two or three in the morning. He said not all professors would do like this, may only be Professor Funabashi.

Oh, my dear colleague and friend Funabashi! You were too tired and you did need to have a good and peace rest.

I know Professor Funabashi at the International Conference on Environmental Sociology in Beijing in 2007. I still could not forget when I finished my presentation on Stakeholders in Pollution Incidents, a silver-haired man stood straight near the rostrum with a brown paper bag in his hand. I stepped forward and began a nice talk with him. Since then, we became good friends and exchanged academic thought despite our age and seniority difference (Professor Funabashi, who was 15 years older than me) in the following seven years.

In 2008, I attended the first ISESEA conference in Hosei University in Japan, Professor Funabashi greeted me cordially, from the meeting agenda to accommodation, he showed me all the detailed information patiently. I was so impressed by what he did for me during the conference and also during the field trip after that. Prior to the meeting, Professor Funabashi and his colleagues had sorted out some research achievements of Japanese environmental sociology, including the early works from Professor Nobuko Iijima. When I returned to China, I kept these rare and

valuable volumes in the library of Public Administration School in Hohai University, and then I was surprised to receive the second copies from Professor Funabashi as a personal present.

In 2009, one of my PhD candidate Luo would like to apply for CSC scholarship, I suggested her studying with Professor Funabashi. On the one hand, I hope she could learn more knowledge and research methods from Professor Funabashi, and get the chance to know the research status of Japanese environmental sociology; on the other hand, I hope an even more opened academic exchange platform could be set up through the bridge of my student.

There were two special things touched me so much. First, one of the application requirements from CSC in China requested overseas universities of joint training to provide free tuition to Chinese students. It was the first year of implementation, Professor Funabashi would have to face the difficulties in opening the new procedures and setting up the new systems. He wrote invitation letter for Luo without delay, and mailed it personally. It must have spent him a lot of time and energy in operating this matter. Unfortunately, Luo's application was not approved at last for some certain reasons. When heard this news, Professor Funabashi still encouraged her "Never give up" and try to pass the application next time.

In 2011, the third ISESEA was held in South Korea. We had a lot of communication opportunities during the time of meeting and the academic investigation. One of the most impressive words he left to me was "I only have six years more left to retire". If ordinary people say these words, I could understand as "I could finally have a rest after the hard work", but for Professor Funabashi, that meant I still had a lot of things to do, but the system would soon let me have a rest. I was not sure the specific situation in Japanese system, but as far as I knew, scholars could keep working until his 80s or even older. So I said to him, "you could continue your work for many many years, just like Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong, who was still thinking and writing at the age of 90".

In 2009 the second ISESEA conference was held in Taiwan. In that meeting, the compiling of *A General World Environmental Chronology* was put on the agenda. In

the third ISESEA conference in 2011, scholars from Japan, South Korea, mainland China, and Taiwan got together to discuss the details in the editorial cooperation of the *A General World Environmental Chronology*. Professor Nobuko Iijima, who was the mother of Japanese environmental sociology, mobilized the program. She and her colleagues had revised the *Environmental Chronology in Japan* several times. The subsequent task at this time was to further supplement and improvement of *A General World Environmental Chronology* and put other countries/regions included. Someone once compared lexicographers' work to "the labor without reward", you could imagine how hard it was to complete the *World Environmental Chronology*.

In 2013, the 4th ISESEA conference was held in Hohai University. Prior to the meeting, on a whim, I decided to launch a big interview program with the topic of "What is Environmental Sociology". On October 11, 2013, I wrote a letter to Professor Funabashi, and told him about my plan. He accepted the invitation with great pleasure. Professor Funabashi was a very detail-oriented person, scholars from China and Japan went on talking about this issue and clarified many operational matters in the separate meeting. Professor Funabashi, would like to make a writing interview, and invite Dr. Gao Na as his interviewer. He told me that he had wanted to comb with his own academic course, this interview would give him a good opportunity to review his work. However, the writing of this interview had not been completed at last just because he had a hard chronological editorial work and many other things to do with during that time. Fortunately, we had kept some audio records from the conversations among Dr. Gao Na, Dr. Zhu Anxin, Professor Saburo Horikawa and Professor Funabashi in the period of that meeting. After the hard work of organizing and revising the audio materials by Dr. Gao Na and Professor Saburo Horikawa, we could finally see Professor Funabashi's article "Theoretical Consciousness and research endogeneity of Environmental Sociology in Japan" was coming out, this was a legacy of the precious heritage.

I was particularly impressed by a small thing during the 2013 ISESEA conference in Nanjing, China. When we returned home from an academic investigation in Wuxi, everyone felt a little tired. I thought Professor Funabashi would go to sleep earlier that night or visit some places nearby since he would be leaving the following day. But he told me that he was free in the evening, and willing to hold talks with Chinese young

environmental sociologists. Then heated discussions were held after dinner. Professor Funabashi listened carefully to their questions and comments, and got so excited to respond all of their questions. Because of more interaction, and more wine to drink after the meeting, the barriers of language and culture were much less than before. They communicated with each other in English, if could not understand what other said, they would write down the Chinese characters instead.

To my astonishment, *A General World Environmental Chronology* as well as *A General Nuclear Power Chronology* were finally published and bore fruitful results during the period of 2014 World Sociology Conference in Yokohama. How great and thick these two volumes were!

At the after-meeting gathering, Professor Funabashi was so happy to introduce his published paper in China. Although Japan's regional tradition and culture had many similarities with China, but due to the language barrier, China's understanding of Japanese environmental sociology was not too much. *Journal of Xuehai* from Academy of Social Science in Jiangsu is one of the most influential academic journals in China. It has been published many academic achievements of environmental sociology, including the articles from Professor Funabashi (2010) and Professor Torigoe (2011). Professor Funabashi's second paper has also been translated and published in the Issue 4 of *Xuehai* Journal this year, but sadly, he could not see his new paper personally.

Japanese colleagues must know more about Professor Funabashi's academic activities and academic achievements, so would not say more about that. According to my own research experience and China's sociology status, Professor Funabashi's academic independence in environmental sociology research is worth cherishing.

First of all, Professor Funabashi always held the attitudes towards knowing objective truth when he conducted his work. He would not like to stop his work due to the opposition from the inflictor groups or the government. We all know the truth of academic independence, but it needs great courage to break through in reality.

Secondly, he did not blindly follow the western academic authority, but built academic terms and the academic theories from his own society, which in turn could explain their own social society. Of course, some theories or terms are suitable for all human societies, but others may be limited in adaptation scope. Both social sciences in Japan and China have one problem of copying concepts and theories simply from western countries, the current situation is still not very optimistic.

Professor Funabashi and his colleagues have developed Japan's own path of environmental sociological studies. As you may know, Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong proposed the term of "Cultural Consciousness", I would like to say that Professor Funabashi not only practiced the cultural consciousness, but also reached the academic consciousness.

Today, we are coming together in Sendai to remember the outstanding environmental sociologist, distinguished professor, a most congenial colleague, and a warm human being. Professor Funabashi will be greatly missed by all who knew him. The purpose of today's event is to study his academic spirit, and push his unfinished academic missions forward.

Wishing the academic legacy from Professor Funabashi could get even better inheritance and development!

(The above is Prof. Ajiang CHEN's speech on the Memorial Session for Prof. Harutoshi Funabashi, the Fifth International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in East Asia, Sendai, Japan, Oct. 30, 2015. Many thanks for the translation by Dr. Dan LIU.)