

Nagasaki University Medical Association

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We cannot talk about the Nagasaki University Medical Association (NUMA) without also discussing the Nagasaki University School of Medicine (NUSM). In this paper, I will first introduce the NUSM and then discuss the NUMA.

Nagasaki University School of Medicine

NUSM's history goes all the way back to the creation of the Nagasaki Bugyosho Nishiyakusho Igakudenshujo (the medical school in Nagasaki West Public Office of Shogun Government), established by J.L.C. Pompe van Meerdervoort, a Dutch naval surgeon, and Ryojun Matsmoto, in 1857. On November 12, 1857, Pompe van Meerdervoort gave the first medical lecture to Matsumoto and 12 students. This day has been designated as a day for commemoration of the foundation of NUSM. In 1861, the enthusiasm of these founders resulted in the completion of the Kojima Yojosho, a Western-style hospital and medical school, on Kojima Satono Oka, overlooking Nagasaki harbor. It was here that many Japanese medical students began to attend regular lectures on specific branches of medicine, as well as receive clinical training. People of that time were surprised by Pompe van Meerdervoort's approach to treating all patients without regard to their wealth, poverty or social standing. He taught the admirable philosophy that, "The physician should realize the nature of his vocation, once he has made his choice, he is accountable to the suffering, not to himself. If it is not his wish, then he should choose another profession."

The baptism by fire that the Nagasaki Medical College (currently NUSM) received on August 9, 1945, was an episode in the school's history

that cannot be forgotten. The atomic bombing of Nagasaki resulted in the death of 42 professors and other instructors, 535 students, 206 office workers, 109 nurses and about 200 patients. All of the classrooms and the medical college hospital were burned to the ground together with all of the research materials. It was only through the efforts of our predecessors that the school was brought back from the brink of closure and stands here today

Recently, all national universities in Japan were incorporated as a "national university corporation" in 2004. As a result, NUSM went through major organizational reform with the aim of providing advanced medical training and education in cooperation with the community. These educational initiatives were recognized in March 2009 when the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation, entrusted by the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee, selected NUSM as one of six organizations whose standards significantly exceeded those of about 800 related organizations, including all departments and graduate courses of other national universities. In addition, on the research side, NUSM's Global Strategic Center for Radiation Health Risk Control and the Integrated Global Strategy for the Control of Tropical and Emerging Infectious Diseases were designated as Global Centers of Excellence (COE) programs, which support the creation of world-standard research and education bases. These activities have also received high acclaim internationally.

Nagasaki University Medical Association

NUMA was established at the NUSM on April 1, 1996. A committee for physicians working at

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Sakamoto Region Campus



Nagasaki University Hospital

hospitals had already been formed 10 years before the NUMA, and since that time there had been great demand for the establishment of an association such as NUMA. Thanks to the efforts of the directors of Nagasaki Medical Association—who were employed at the University—NUMA was formed with the support of the Nagasaki City Medical Association, to which the majority of the physicians practicing at Nagasaki University Hospital had belonged to up until this point. Currently, NUMA has 793 members, including physicians from a wide range of diagnosis and treatment departments at NUSM, Nagasaki University Hospital, and physicians affiliated with NUSM's research laboratories. Residents and other young physicians also participate actively in the NUMA.

Currently, university hospitals are at a major turning point. On October 27, 2008, the National University Hospital Council of Japan reported that 28 of the 45 national university hospitals posted losses in fiscal 2007. The main reason for these losses was the decrease in the national government's subsidies for operating expenses from 58.4 billion yen*² (730 million USD) in fiscal 2004 to 36.7 billion yen (458.8 million USD) in fiscal 2007. Physicians employed at university hospitals find themselves in the extremely difficult position of having to provide quality medical care while also conducting advanced research. Speaking out in support of improving this situation requires organizational strength. For the first

time, now this can be done through University Medical Associations. The National Council of University Medical Associations in Japan has been established in order to convey messages across the country. Unfortunately, the number of members is not sufficient to successfully petition for the improvement of the working environment for physicians at university hospitals.

At the same time, the NUMA is unique in that it has more members compared to other university medical associations nationwide. One reason for this is that not only physicians at the NUSM and Nagasaki University Hospital can join, physicians from hospitals related to the medical school and physicians employed at other related healthcare facilities are eligible for membership as well. Physicians working at the University Hospital are often sent to regional core hospitals outside of the school on rotations, but if they belong to the University they can remain a member of the NUMA.

The ability to enjoy the following benefits is used to recruit new members.

- Members can enroll in the Japan Medical Association's (JMA) professional liability insurance program.
- Members can enroll in Nagasaki Prefecture's National Health Insurance for Physicians.
- Members can join and use Nagasaki Doctor's Credit Corporative.
- Members can enroll in JMA physician's pension program.

*2 US dollar/JPY exchange rate: US\$1=80 yen.

- Members are eligible to apply for Nagasaki Medical Association's medical research subsidies.
- Members are eligible for aid from the NUMA's subsidies program for medical research.

In recent medical disputes, there were many cases in which individuals, not just university hospitals, were sued. Appropriate steps can be taken with the JMA's professional liability insurance program to protect one's self from such lawsuits. In addition, the University Medical Association really emphasizes support activities such as assistance with conferences, clinical practice, and clinical training.

Beginning in 2009, NUMA introduced "UpToDate" an evidence based, peer reviewed medical information resource, available via the Web and Mobile Devices. There had been requests for this, but its adoption had been put off due to the costs involved. I am very happy that nowadays so many physicians working at the University Hospital are using it in their daily practice.

It should also be noted that NUMA members carried out activities to treat victims who had been exposed to radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident after the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011. In particular, Professor Shunichi Yamashita (currently vice president of Fukushima Medical

University), Professor Noboru Takamura, and Assistant Professor, Akira Ohtsuru (currently professor at Fukushima Medical University) continue providing medical support to the affected areas, cooperating with the members of Fukushima Medical University. Their dedication to this task will remain a much-lauded part of the history of NUSM and the NUMA for a long time to come. In addition, NUMA made a donation to Fukushima Medical University as a sign of support.

NUMA is also acting as one of the 14 municipal medical associations, which are included in Nagasaki Medical Association, where we send four delegates. We also have a total of 20 representatives on 13 committees, and one member on the board of directors for Nagasaki Medical Association. As another example of our proactive involvement in medical association activities, we also have one delegate and one alternate delegate for the JMA, and one member on the exploratory committee for the Maternal Protection Act and Perinatal Care.

We sincerely hope to promote the understanding of NUMA's activities among young and motivated physicians, strengthen the cooperation with prefectural and city medical associations, and contribute to the greater good of society.



Basic Medical Science Building
(photograph by Ichiro Sekine, Professor Emeritus)