



長崎大学  
NAGASAKI UNIVERSITY

LONDON  
SCHOOL of  
HYGIENE  
& TROPICAL  
MEDICINE



Title of PhD project / theme	<b>Historical development of the Japanese health system c.1920-1960: how useful is a path dependency framework of explanation?</b>
Supervisory team	LSHTM supervisor: Professor Martin Gorsky, Centre for History in Public Health, Faculty of Public Health and Policy  I do not have connections yet with Nagasaki University, but would like to develop a collaboration with any social scientists having relevant interests in the history of medicine or social policy.
Brief description of project / theme	<p>The comparative history of health systems in the advanced industrial nations is a developing field which draws on a rich body of theory to explain change. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Japan offers an interesting case study, of a social health insurance system which advanced towards universal coverage throughout a period of intense political turbulence.</p> <p>Explanatory frameworks have ranged from structural functionalist approaches that emphasize demographic and economic factors; political economy approaches concerned with human capital or labour mobilisation; political pluralism, focusing on the balance of interest groups; and path dependency, which examines the mechanisms by which decisions taken at an earlier point condition future trajectories of change and continuity.</p> <p>The aim of the PhD will be to explore the use of this latter approach (compared to the others) in explaining the development of the Japanese health system, between the birth of social health insurance in 1922 (with a backward glance to precursors) until universal coverage was reached c.1961.</p>
Particular <i>prior</i> educational requirements for a student undertaking this project	History, social science or political science training, with a good prior grasp of 20 <sup>th</sup> century Japanese history and awareness of techniques of historical documentary research.
Skills we expect a student to develop/acquire whilst pursuing this project	Comparative theoretical understanding of health system development. Skills of documentary research, presentation of synthesis and argument. Ability to relate historical findings to current debates about paths to universal health coverage in low- and middle-income countries.