Noted Japanese Jurist Speaks Out Against Capital Punishment

While delivering the 1996 Jerome Hall Lecture on April 4 to a capacity crowd, at Bloomington’s School of Law, Shigemitsu Dando, one of Japan’s foremost jurists, argued for the abolishment of the death penalty, which he said was inconsistent with human dignity.

Dando is a retired justice of the Supreme Court of Japan, professor and dean emeritus of Tokyo University’s Faculty of Law, and Special Advisor to the Imperial Household. The author of numerous books and articles, including a dozen articles written in English, French, and German, he has spent a large part of his career examining the legal and moral implications of capital punishment and urging the Japanese government to do away with the death penalty.

His presentation, “Toward the Abolition of the Death Penalty,” was a wide-ranging argument against capital punishment that touched on historical, religious, legal, and literary sources.

Dando said, “Nowadays, almost all industrialized countries have ratified the United Nations optional protocol calling for the abolition of the death penalty. It looks rather unnatural and unreasonable that our two major developed countries still remain retentionists.”

Dando began his hour-long lecture by reviewing some precedents in Japanese history. He noted that during the Heian Period (810 A.D.-1156 A.D.), the death sentence was not enforced in Japan, because Japanese emperors traditionally commuted such sentences. He concluded his lecture by stating that the death penalty was inconsistent with humanistic criminal policy.

Continued on page 17

East Asian Studies Center Hosts High School Honors Seminar

The East Asian Studies Center at Bloomington hosted its annual high school honors seminar on April 9, 1996.

The seminar, “Human Rights: Understanding East Asia from New Perspectives,” focused on providing high school participants with an overview of human rights issues and specific case studies from East Asia and the United States. In keeping with the new format instituted in 1994, the seminar offers a variety of learning methods from lectures and discussion groups to simulations and case studies.

Attendance at these seminars for high school students has been steadily increasing from 45 students in 1993 to over 100 students this year. Given that a number of schools had to be turned away this year, the East Asian Studies Center is considering offering two high school honors seminars—one in the fall and one in the spring.

This year, participants came primarily from Indiana high schools, although the seminar normally draws from Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky. The topic of human rights attracted students from a wide spectrum of classes: international relations, world studies, Chinese language, world religions, humanities, history, and geography.

The guest lecturer for the seminar was Jean Robinson, who teaches political science, East Asian languages and cultures, and women’s studies at IU. Discussion facilitators and speakers included Anjali Sengupta, outreach coordinator (East Asian Studies Center) and graduate students Colleen Berry, Tun Myint, Anna Pawul, Shoba Sivaprasad, and Jennifer Turner.
In June, Mr. Amumongkol Sirivedbin (right), president of Bangkok's National Institute for Development Administration (NIDA), visited Bloomington to put the finishing touches on a new exchange program.

To be launched in Fall 1996, the program provides for up to two School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) graduate students per semester to take courses at NIDA. A similar number of Thai students will come to pursue their studies at SPEA.

Among those Mr. Sirivedbin met at a luncheon given in his honor were Randall Baker (SPEA), Richard Burke (Telecommunications), Joseph Miller (Business), Ruth Miller (International Services), Frank Proschan (Cultural Studies), Catherine Siffin (Center on Aging), Richard Stryker (Overseas Study), and Kurt Zorn (SPEA).

Dando, continued from page 6

When asked what his biggest reason for opposing the death penalty was, Dando simply responded, "Misjudgement."

Dando's lecture was a fitting tribute to the late Jerome Hall, whom Dando met on his first trip to the United States in 1950 and with whom he remained life-long friends.

On this trip, Dando also spent a day in Indianapolis, meeting with Governor Evan Bayh and speaking to a group of lawyers and business leaders in the chambers of the Indiana Supreme Court—an event sponsored by the Japan-America Society of Indiana and presided over by Indiana Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard. At the statehouse reception held in his honor, Justice Dando received the "Sagamore of the Wabash" award, the State of Indiana's highest civilian honor. The Justice is the highest ranking Japanese government official ever to visit Indiana.

The week-long visit, hosted by Dean Alfred Aman, was arranged largely through the efforts of Joseph Hoffmann of the IU School of Law, who was a Fulbright scholar in Japan in 1995. Hoffmann said, "Justice Dando commands, in Japan, the highest respect of any person in the legal field. That is why his visit to the law school is so important."

The school is embarking on a new Pacific Rim Partnerships Program which will forge closer ties with East Asian institutions.

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Ukrainian Educators Tour IUPUI

As part of a two-week study tour of the United States, 10 Ukrainian high school and college-level economic educators and a translator visited the IUPUI Center for Economic Education, February 24-28. The IUPUI Center was one of only three locations selected by the National Council on Economic Education (NCEE) as host sites for the tour. The other cities were Chicago and St. Louis. The visit by the Ukrainian delegation followed economic education seminars taught by the Center's director, Robert Harris, who has made three trips since 1994 to the Newly Independent States: to St. Petersburg, Omsk and Siberia in Russia; to Baku, Azerbaijan; and to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Accompanied by representatives of the NCEE, Harris arranged for the Ukrainian educators to attend college and pre-college classes, to meet with university and government officials, to visit a 2,500 acre farm and a farm co-op, and to tour the Cummins and Klaas factories in Columbus, Indiana.

The visiting educators commented that in their country roughly 50 workers would have been required to farm the land that one full-time and two part-time workers farm in central Indiana. They particularly enjoyed getting a briefing on the new farm bill at Indiana Senator Richard Lugar's office.

A high point of their visit was an evening spent comparing educational systems with Indianapolis-area K-12 teachers who are participating in the IUPUI Center's mentor teacher program, "Key Teachers in Economic Education."

Both groups were surprised to discover how much they have in common. They agreed that, for both countries, the biggest problems in education were a lack of student discipline and low teacher pay. The U.S. teachers were shocked to discover that Ukrainian teachers qualify for extended maternity leave following the birth of a child.

While in Indiana, the Ukrainian educators also participated in a session of Harris' introductory economics course, which will be broadcast on Indianapolis public television this fall. Their insights were very helpful for IUPUI students trying to understand different economic systems.

This program and on site seminars in the former Soviet Union can help to ease the difficult transition away from command and toward a market system.

For further information, contact Robert Harris at IUPUI (317) 274-8100.